



Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis

A Wikistrat Historical Simulation
March 2023

Introduction

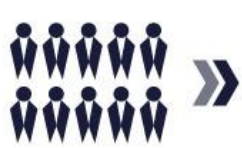


The world is in a very different geopolitical reality in 2023 than it was in 1962. The Cold War is long gone, the Soviet Union is a thing of the past, and the focus of geopolitical tensions in the past decades has often been the Middle East rather than Cuba or Latin America. And yet, the basic logic 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 2023.

In light of the **60th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis**, Wikistrat ran a role-playing simulation for international relations and political science undergraduate students from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York and RIT Kosovo. In this, the students entered the shoes of historical decision makers and collaborated with their peers overseas and Wikistrat experts in order 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.

Participants also interacted with other groups using covert and public channels of communication.

LIVE UPDATES



Anastas Mikoyan

 Letter to President Kennedy proposal updated 17 minutes ago • [view change](#)



Douglas Dillon

 Team USA Policy 1 created 21 minutes ago



Che Guevara

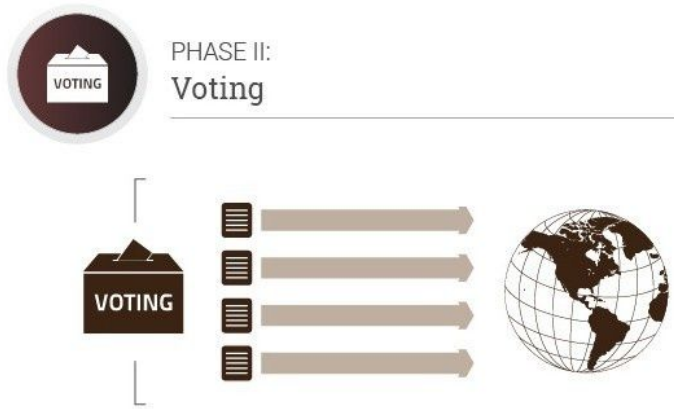
 Assurances in advance on Agreements with commented 34 minutes ago



Sergio del Valle

 Assurances in advance on Agreements with updated yesterday at 7:41 PM • [view change](#)

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.

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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

MARCH 2023

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

Select your team to get started

Cuba USA USSR

The Simulation in Numbers

Throughout the **6** days of the simulation, **33** historical decision-makers from **3** countries were role-played by **13** RIT Kosovo students, **11** RIT NY students, and **9** Wikistrat experts. In total, the teams suggested **29** policy proposals to their leaders. These were discussed and strengthened through **112** comments on the platform and over **1K** messages on WhatsApp. **24** proposals were sent using covert channels of communication, and **13** statements were publicly shared with the international community.

Before the Simulation:

Preparatory Reading and Watching & Onboarding Call

A Quick Introduction

The History of the Cuban Missile Crisis in under 5 Min

Cuban Missile Crisis from the Cuban Perspective

soviet



Cuban Missile Crisis

For 13 days in October 1962 the world hovered on the brink of nuclear war, with the United States and the Soviet Union locked in a standoff at the height of the Cold War



Apr 1961: Soviet Union increases support of Fidel Castro's regime in Cuba after Bay of Pigs invasion.

Sep 1962: Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev gives go-ahead to install nuclear missiles on Cuba to defend island from U.S. invasion.

Oct 14: American U-2 spy plane obtains photographs of missile sites on Cuba.

Oct 16: U.S. President John F. Kennedy convenes ExComm – group of senior advisors – to tackle crisis.

Oct 18: ExComm told installation of SS-4 missiles is nearly complete.

Oct 22: Kennedy makes TV address, declaring naval blockade of Cuba and warning U.S. will retaliate if any Soviet missile is launched from Cuba.

Oct 24: Khrushchev says blockade is "an act of aggression". U.S. forces go to DEFCON 2 – highest alert status short of war.

Oct 25: CIA reports SS-4 missiles are ready to fire – Kennedy considers invasion.

Oct 26: Soviets offer to dismantle sites if U.S. pledges not to invade Cuba.

Oct 27: Khrushchev now demands removal of U.S. missile sites from Turkey.

Oct 28: Khrushchev announces removal of missiles in exchange for U.S. pledge never to invade Cuba. Deal to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey not made public.

Nov 20: Naval blockade lifted after Soviet missiles withdrawn.

Apr 1963: U.S. missiles in Turkey dismantled – kept secret until 1989.

Aug 30: "Hotline" – direct communication between Moscow and Washington – goes into operation.

Oct 24: Soviet ships carrying military equipment to Cuba reverse course as they near quarantine zone.

U2 plane shot down over Cuba, killing U.S. pilot – war looks imminent.

Simulation Tutorial

0:00 / 2:27

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RIT Rochester Institute of Technology
RIT Kosovo
WIKISTRAT

"Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis" Simulation: Early Access

Dear All,

You can now access the **"Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis"** simulation.

This role-playing simulation, which will run until March 22, is part of the partnership between Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York and RIT Kosovo.

You can participate in this online simulation at any time and from any place.

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Cuba USA USSR

Your Character and Login Details

In this **simulation**, you will be on **team**, playing - .

Please note that you don't have to study your character or limit your analysis to their role (if you are, for example, playing a military role, you don't need to focus on military-related actions only).

You can access **Wikistrat's interactive platform** using the following details:

During the Simulation:

Policy Proposing and Negotiations



Recent Activity

Click here to see what's new on Team USSR



Nikita Khrushchev

Peace, Through Collaboration updated about 6 hours ago • view change

A Response to President Kennedy updated about 6 hours ago • view change



Lyndon B. Johnson

For the Good of All updated yesterday at 9:26 PM • view change



John F. Kennedy

For the Good of All created yesterday at 6:03 PM



Che Guevara

Letter to the US and USSR updated yesterday at 1:15 PM • view change



John F. Kennedy

Peace and Prosperity updated yesterday at 12:00 PM • view change



Anastas Mikoyan

A final attempt towards a peaceful outcome updated yesterday at 11:23 AM • view change



John F. Kennedy

US-USSR towards Peace updated yesterday at 11:10 AM • view change



Anastas Mikoyan

USSR's final attempt to a peaceful outcome updated yesterday at 10:59 AM • view change



Andrei Gromyko

USSR-US Communications updated yesterday at 2:36 AM • view change



The Cuban Situation Room Private Communication Public Announcements



Public Announcements

This channel serves to publicly share information with all the teams.

Add Announcement

Page	Summary	Author	Replies	Likes
Peace, Through Collaboration	A formal response to President Kennedy's announcements, "Peace and Prosperity," and "For the Good of All" by Premier Nikita Khrushchev.	 Mar 23, 2023 @Nikita Khrushchev	0	3
For the Good of All	A letter of peace by the USA to the world.	 Mar 22, 2023 @John F. Kennedy	0	2
Peace and Prosperity	The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, promote peace!	 Mar 22, 2023 @John F. Kennedy	0	4
Letter to the US and USSR	Dear representatives of the USA and USSR, We appreciate your efforts to find a peaceful resolution to this dangerous situation. We have carefully considered the USSR's proposal regarding the missile crisis and would like to express our concerns about one of	 Mar 22, 2023 @Che Guevara	0	3

During the Simulation:

Daily Strategic Questions & 24/7 Supervision



Team Cuba: March 21 Updates (Less than 48 Hours)



Tali Stambulchik <tali@wikistrat.com>

to Sarah, Robert, bcc: Anttoni, bcc: Sinan, bcc: Risina, bcc: atn4403, bcc: Lorine, bcc: kdf2944, bcc: vesa

Dear Team Cuba,

We are now entering the last two days of the simulation.

On March 22, at 11:59 PM ET, the collaborative part of the simulation will be concluded.

Afterward, we will move on to the **voting phase (March 23)**, in which you will be asked to vote on t

Below, you will find a few new points for consideration:

- [Che Guevara](#) proposed contacting the USSR to get its support and avoid a military cor channels. In a private communication to Cuba, [Anastas Mikoyan](#) from the USSR impl unwavering support for the USSR. In the USSR's opinion, both countries could demons United States. Similarly, [Ricardo Alarcón Quesada](#) said that it might be important fi announcement on Cuba and the USSR's mutual support of each other?
- [Robert F. Kennedy](#) made a public announcement to Cuba and the USSR promising to lift engage in any activities aimed at overthrowing the government of Cuba in exchange fr positive to Cuba even though it does not include any pledge for its – currently – se **What can Cuba gain – and lose – by doing so? Can Cuba trust the USA?**

Team USSR: March 18 Updates



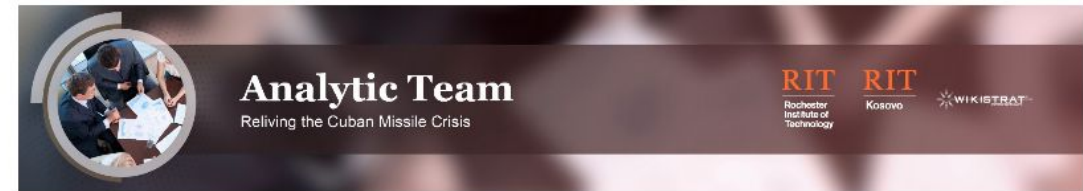
Tali Stambulchik <tali@wikistrat.com>

to Robert, Sarah, bcc: John, bcc: albac, bcc: mnc8791, bcc: nasers, bcc: amw8002, bcc: dardan

Comrades,

As we are entering the second day of the simulation, we would love to read your thoughts

- [Anastas Mikoyan](#) proposed urging UN member states to hold a firm line against t it continues to pursue its current path and sending a clear message that any laur humanity and the rest of the world. Do you think it is possible to obtain global sup
- [Valerian Zorin](#) proposed publicly announcing a formal alliance agreement with Ct the event of armed conflict. How do you think this would affect the risk of a nucle. USSR lose credibility in the Soviet Bloc? Will such a choice damage its deterren



Control Team

The simulation is managed by the following **Control Team**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out at any time.



Tali Stambulchik [Staff]
Project Manager

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Lead Analyst

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After the Simulation:

Simulation Report & Diplomas



The Alternative Trajectory:
Risk Escalation Followed by Consolidated Positions and De-escalating Treaties

The combination of these proposals and courses of actions allows us to conclude the first phase of risk escalation while the parties strengthen their negotiating positions, and a second phase of de-escalation treaties. The results are the likely removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba and US missiles in Turkey, the strengthening of Cuban-Soviet bilateral relations, and the enhancement of the ideological war for influence in Latin America.

Myles Babcock • 3rd+
Student at Rochester Institute of Technology
15h • 🌐

I'm happy to share that I've obtained a new certification: 'Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis' Simulation from [Wikistrat](#)!

MYLES BABCOCK

for taking part in Wikistrat's "Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis" historical simulation in March 2023.

The simulation was part of the partnership between the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York and RIT Kosovo.

In this role-playing exercise, the students collaborated with their peers overseas and members of Wikistrat's community of experts to explore the events that led to the crisis and its alternative outcomes.


Myles always has some great ideas.
Myles's teammates from RIT Kosovo

Robert Muharremi
Professor, RIT Kosovo

Sarah Burns
Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology

Celebrating a New Certification

Licenses & certifications

 **"Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis" Simulation**
Wikistrat
Issued Mar 2023

[Show credential](#)

Skills: Leadership · Critical Thinking · Teamwork · Problem Solving

Kahmar Futch • 3rd+
Student at the Rochester Institute of Technology
14h • 🌐

+ Follow

I'm happy to share that I've received the Excellence Award from [Wikistrat](#) it was an amazing experience to be able to work with my peers in Kosovo and I hope to continue working with them in the future.

IS GIVEN TO
KAHMAR FUTCH

for outstanding participation in and contribution to Wikistrat's "Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis" historical simulation in March 2023.

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In this role-playing exercise, the students collaborated with their peers overseas and members of Wikistrat's community of experts to explore the events that led to the crisis and its alternative outcomes.

Robert Muharremi
Professor, RIT Kosovo

Sarah Burns
Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology

Oren Kesler
CEO, Wikistrat

EXCELLENCE AWARD
THE TOP QUALITY CONTRIBUTOR

🌐 4

1 comment

The Simulation's Value

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the greatest), **86%** of the participants voted either **4** or **5** on how much they **enjoyed** the simulation, with the average being **4.3**. In addition, **79%** voted either **4** or **5** on how much they **learned** from the simulation, with the average being **4.2**.



Although I enjoyed every part of the simulation, one part I enjoyed most was when we all started to engage in the public announcement section.

I highly value the fact that RIT Kosovo and RIT New York collaborated in this amazing activity.

Honestly, I am not very engaged in politics in my day-to-day life. However, through taking part in this activity, I was able to **view many political actions that happen every day**, from both the actors' and the audience's points of view. I had the chance to **demonstrate the effectiveness of my research and cooperative skills**. In addition, because we had to over-analyze each of our actions and foresee the results, **I improved my critical thinking skills**.

RIT Kosovo student

A Word from the Participants

“

Participating in the negotiation process was a truly **enriching experience**, despite the initial challenges posed by the six-hour time difference between the negotiating parties. Our team, however, rose to the challenge and achieved success. What fascinated me most was the observation that most of the deals were struck behind the scenes, with leaders assuming different personas during public announcements. This insight provided me with a **deeper understanding of the intricacies of the negotiation process** and empathize with the leaders of my country as they engaged in crucial negotiations.

Moreover, the situation we faced was further intensified by the looming possibility of a third world war, which added immense pressure to our work. Nevertheless, we were able to perform exceptionally well under these circumstances, **learning valuable lessons in strategic and judicious decision-making. Overall, this experience has imparted a great deal of knowledge and skills that will serve me well in future negotiation scenarios**

RIT Kosovo student

The **collaboration** aspect of the simulation was the most valuable for me. **It was unlike anything that I have experienced before**, and I was happy to be a part of it.

RIT New York student

A Word from the Participants

“

I liked that **the stimulation taught me a lot I didn't know about history**. I met **new people** and **made friends** around campus. I have **practiced my writing skills** and understood something important about politics: how hard decision making actually is.

RIT Kosovo student

I enjoyed the **interactivity of it and the way this simulation teaches us by being interactive**. One of the most valuable aspects that helped this simulation was **teamwork**. My team helped me bring to light the many possibilities to assess the situation best and chose the best course of action.

I have learned that a good team, with a goal, vision, motivation, and goodwill, is going to help everyone learn more. I **gained so much knowledge throughout this simulation regarding decision-making, the importance of the use of words, and plainly the art of diplomacy with a side of violence/threats**.

One other thing to note was the **presence of the staff** in the publishing policies where they would respond by asking more questions, adding to the critical thinking exercise.

RIT Kosovo student

A Word from the Participants

“

During the Cuban Missile Simulation, I had the opportunity to represent Cuba for five days. The aspect that I enjoyed the most was the negotiations. It was **exciting to feel the tension of the situation** and it felt like we were **practicing what we learned in our classes**.

As a participant, I found the negotiations to be the most valuable aspect of the simulation. I **learned how to communicate effectively in a high-pressure situation** and **negotiate** with other countries **to achieve our goals**. Through the simulation, I gained a **deeper understanding** of the importance of diplomacy in international relations and the role that negotiation plays in resolving conflicts.

In terms of skills, knowledge, and perception, the Cuban Missile Simulation taught me several valuable lessons. I **developed my negotiation and communication skills**, which I believe will be useful in my future career. The simulation also allowed me to gain a **better understanding of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cold War, and the historical context of the international relations**.

Overall, the Cuban Missile Simulation was a valuable experience that taught me **practical skills and knowledge that I can use in the future**. I am grateful for the opportunity to have participated in this simulation and I look forward to applying what I learned in my future endeavors.

RIT Kosovo student

Reliving the Cuban Missile Crisis

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For more information on Wikistrat's crowdsourced solutions and systems, contact: info@wikistrat.com

