



CMUNC

GUIDE TO CRISIS

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INTRODUCTION

If this committee is your first crisis committee, please read on to familiarize yourself with crisis procedure and the intricacies that crisis can involve. If you're a seasoned veteran of crisis committees, go ahead and read it anyway for fun, you may learn a thing or two.

Crisis committees, in many respects, compose the upper echelon of the Model United Nations circuit. While General Assembly committees can be equally difficult, the difficulty in a Crisis committee resides in the more research-oriented setting rather than the low probability of being called on in a large body. In a General Assembly, you must know how to get your point across quickly and effectively, in the limited time that you are given to speak; it is quite the opposite in crisis committees. You will have many opportunities to speak; therefore, the quality of your speech must maintain strength or you risk invalidating your own points.

That being said, crisis committees require only that you respond intelligently as a group or individual with writing, leadership, and logical debate. For those of you that are now scared don't worry! Crisis committees also differ from GAs because they are far more volatile; lost momentum can easily be regained as crises develop.

GENERAL PROCEDURE AND THE BASICS OF CRISIS

For the purposes of this overview, let us imagine that you are at a Model UN conference and are assigned the position of Secretary of Defense in the United States Cabinet. Let us also imagine that the US Cabinet is a crisis committee. Throughout the course of the simulation, crisis staff will create a storyline for your committee to react to.

During the simulation, you will try your best to represent the Secretary of Defense's interests by reacting to situations. Similarly, your fellow committee members will react to each situation based on whom they are representing. Your reaction to a situation expresses itself through four tools that you can use: **Directives, Communiqués, Press Releases, and Portfolio Requests.**

DIRECTIVES

Directives – also known as action plans – are the main form of writing in a crisis committee, or the most widely recognized. They consist of orders and actions that the committee as a whole wants to take. Unlike resolutions enacted in General Assemblies, there is generally no flowery language present. In fact, flowery language is frowned upon because the point of an **action** plan is quite clear, to take action and not waste time with verbiage. Directives can consist of bullet points that delineate specific actions to be taken by the appropriate body.

While in GA you only had power to suggest and recommend, crisis committees give you power to take action. You will not necessarily have time specifically to write directives, as the pace of committee moves quickly. You will need to balance writing and speaking since committee does not stop to wait for you to finish a response.

NOTE: Directives need to be specific: vague orders can result in a variety of problems for the writer of the directive. These include looking ridiculous in front of your committee, miscommunication leading to consequences that were not intended, and more. The best directives are those that are not just approved by a large majority of the committee, but actually those that also prove an in depth knowledge of the situation at hand. An example of a directive is below. Note the specificity. This is what we expect.

EXAMPLE OF A DIRECTIVE:

New orders for Minuteman III ICBM silo operators

- ❖ Arm 50% of missiles in silos within 100 miles of the United States Eastern seaboard
- ❖ No fire unless fired upon
- ❖ Scramble 35 B-2 Spirit stealth bombers for additional stealth reconnaissance missions over Russian airspace.

COMMUNIQUÉS

Communiqués are messages from the entire committee to another country, organization, person or group of people. These facilitate dialogue with relevant actors in a crisis. Communiqués often include negotiations, threats, and requests for aid or support but are not limited to those topics. Keep in mind that a communiqué needs to be just as well worded as a directive; furthermore, this is the place for your inner linguist to shine! Seriously, the tone of a letter can absolutely change the meaning of it. See an example of a communiqué below:

EXAMPLE OF A COMMUNIQUÉ:

Dear Mr. Phillip Hammond,

It has come to our attention that British naval forces are currently forming a blockade across the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea, and blocking United States naval vessels. This is a threat to both our national security as well as economic security and we will not take it lightly. We expect full compensation for damages to trade, as well as full reversal of the blockade. In your capacity as the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Defence, stop this nonsense or face consequences.

Sincerely,

The United States Cabinet

PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are similar to communiqués in the fact that they are sent from the committee as a whole; the difference lies in the fact that a press release is addressed to the public. Press releases can help sway the opinions of the public or provoke public reactions to crises at hand. Example below:

EXAMPLE OF A PRESS RELEASE:

Recent reports from news sources indicate that an alien spacecraft crashed through our atmosphere and landed somewhere in the desert near Las Vegas, Nevada.

After investigation, the Department of Defense has issued a statement that the downed craft was a prototype Air Force research project. Unfortunately, it still needs some work. The Cabinet would like to extend regrets over the lives lost in the crash and dispel rumors of alien landings.

PORTFOLIO REQUESTS

Portfolio requests are actions taken unilaterally by members of the committee. Since you are representing Sec. of Defense for the purposes of this tutorial, your portfolio requests are limited to powers that the person acting as Sec. of Defense exercises in real life. Portfolio requests are by definition taken without the consent of the committee as a whole. For example, if the committee failed the example directive above, or if you did not want the committee-at-large knowing what passed, then you could send in a

portfolio request detailing the same orders. You could only do that if you had the power to do so; in other words, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve could not exercise portfolio powers associated with military control.

Portfolio requests should not be limiting; they are a chance to show your creativity! If, for example, you are Chairman of the Federal Reserve, you are in control of an incredibly large sum of money. What you do with that sum of money is up to you, but keep in mind that consequences will follow from every action you take. If you try to bribe the President, and he declines, you could be arrested on treason charges.

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO REQUESTS

1. Arranging a secret meeting with an important figure
2. Launching a covert military attack using private resources
3. Leaking false intelligence to an organization
4. Communicating with a delegate from another related crisis committee

CONCLUSION

“Succeeding” in a crisis committee, means that you have successfully represented your character throughout the simulation; one could say that it is a bit of an acting game. In some cases, you will need to focus purely on one of the four types of reactions; however, you will most likely need to utilize all four in some combination to have the greatest influence on committee. And that’s it! You now have a command of the basic tools that you will need to function in a crisis-based committee!

One more thing you should know for all crisis simulations is that the crisis staff acts as the response team for every action you or a member of the committee could take. Every time one of the four above actions takes place, the crisis team responds according to the direction of the storyline. You input whatever decisions you would like to, and the crisis team will output a reaction by bodies outside the committee that you will be required to respond to again.