Ronald Reagan Historical Cabinet

Rachel Bielski, Chair

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Topic 1: Future of Nuclear Power in Military Weaponry
Topic 2: Military Action in Grenada
Dear Delegates,

My name is Rachel Bielski and I am pleased to be the chair of the Ronald Reagan Historical Cabinet of LYMUN I. For those of you who do not know, this is the first ever LYMUN conference. Which means not only will you be a part of history, it is up to you to make this as fun, realistic, and successful as possible. This is also my first time as a chair since the beginning of my MUN career, so I am sure this will prove to be a learning experience for everyone in the cabinet. Let us make it a successful day, please.

What I am looking for as criteria for awards in delegates is a lot of the usual- you should remain true to the policy of your respective position and use proper parliamentary procedure. Your position should be well researched and you should have a firm understanding of each topic so that a proper discussion should occur. However, above all, I am looking for dedication. This cabinet will only be interesting and worth your time if everyone puts work into it. Can you stay in character? Will you burnout halfway through the conference? If you try your hardest I will most likely probably notice. Your position papers should come with you the day of the conference AT LATEST. But e-mailing me beforehand is a good idea (hint, hint, hint). You will not be eligible for an award without position papers. I’m not playing, yo.

So that’s the quick overview that you probably didn’t really read! But if you did, send me an email with your position's name and the secret password. The secret password is: moderated caucus. Following this letter are the background guides for your two topics. Have a good time skimming them frantically the night before the conference. Happy researching!

Rachel Bielski, Chair

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Background

The year of this historical simulation is 1983. Ronald Reagan was three years through his first term in office, and his administration had to deal with chaos and uncertainty from all around the world. Problems between the U.S. and the Caribbean nation began in 1979 (while the Cold War was still in effect) when a bloodless coup placed the pro-Marxist Maurice Bishop as the Prime Minister, which led to strengthened ties between Grenada and communist nations like Cuba and the Soviet Union. The U.S. had to tread carefully in its response to the situation, and it is up to you to decide whether or not to answer the call for invasion. Elsewhere in the world, the effects of the ongoing Cold War could be felt.

A continuous buildup of nuclear weapons had been polarizing nations worldwide, and indeed, it seemed as though the world was on the brink of infinite peril. The public spoke out widely against the use of nuclear technology. On June 12, 1982, one million people demonstrated in New York City's Central Park against nuclear weapons and for an end to the cold war arms race. It was the largest anti-nuclear protest and the largest political demonstration in American history. However, the necessity to defend the country and fight communism is one that members of this cabinet will also have to consider.

Topic 1: Future of Nuclear Power in Military Weaponry

Ronald Reagan’s first term as President, and indeed the early 1980’s in general have largely been defined by the Cold War, causing international tension and a general uncertainty about what future warfare will look like.

The United States of America created the first nuclear weapon during World War II, for use against the Axis Powers. The Manhattan Project was a research and development project that produced the first atomic bombs during World War II. It was led by the United States with the support of the United Kingdom and Canada. Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union at the time, had secretly been aware of progress that the United States had been making on the front of nuclear technology. In August 1945, on Truman's orders, two atomic bombs were dropped on Japanese cities. The first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The damage done to Japan was devastating, and the end of the fighting in both Japan and Europe followed on a short timeline.
Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the United Nations was founded. This international organization with the goal of stopping wars between countries was the world’s answer to replace the League of Nations. During the United Nation’s first General Assembly in London in January 1946, they discussed the future of Nuclear Weapons and created the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. The goal of this assembly was to eliminate the use of all Nuclear weapons. With the discovery of atomic energy came the need to regulate it. On 14 June 1946, the United States representative to the Commission, Bernard Baruch, presented the Baruch Plan, wherein the United States (at the time the only state possessing atomic weapons) would destroy its atomic arsenal on the condition that the U.N. imposed controls on atomic development that would not be subject to United Nations Security Council veto. These controls would allow only the peaceful use of atomic energy. The plan was passed by the Commission, but not agreed to by the Soviet Union who abstained on the proposal in the Security Council. Despite initial hopes, it was clear that agreement would not be reached.

Just six months after the U.N. General Assembly, the United States conducted its first post-war nuclear tests. This was called Operation Crossroads.[10] The purpose of this operation was to test the effectiveness of nuclear explosions on ships. During this time, the Soviet Union was conducting tests of it’s own. The first soviet bomb was detonated on August 29, 1949, shocking the entire world. This was entirely ahead of the schedule the U.S. had predicted. The arms race had begun.

By 1954, both the United States and the Soviet Union had successfully tested their first generation of H-bombs. The tests proved that fusion bombs could easily be made to produce explosions more than 1,000 times as powerful as the fission bombs used in the Second World War. By 1961, two more countries had developed and successfully tested nuclear weapons. United Kingdom had started its program during the Second World War in close co-operation with the United States, and the first British bomb was tested on October 3, 1952. On February 13, 1960, France followed suit. The French program received very little technological and scientific support from other countries. Four and a half years later, on October 16, 1964, China
became the fifth nuclear power after having received only reluctant assistance from the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to forestall the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons, the United States and the Soviet Union took the lead in negotiating an international agreement that would prohibit the further spread of nuclear weapons without banning the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The result was the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also referred to as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT. When it came into force on March 5, 1970, the NPT separated between two categories of states: On the one hand, nuclear weapons states On the other hand, non-nuclear weapons states – that is, all other signatories of the Treaty. According to its provisions, the nuclear weapons states on signing the NPT agree not to release nuclear weapons or in any other way help other states to acquire or build nuclear weapons. At the same time, the non-nuclear weapons states signatories agree not to acquire or develop "nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

However, from the very beginning there was a third group of countries- those who were non-nuclear and chose not be part of the NPT. This was for a variety of reasons, including the desire to develop a nuclear arsenal in the future, or disagreements with the way the NPT maintained the current world order. Unfortunately, since the signing of the NPT, the cold war has continued. Tensions are mounting between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

Ronald Reagan identifies as a nuclear-abolitionist, something overlooked by many in light of the arms race that brings us to the present. Many views that Reagan held in the mid-1940s changed as he evolved from liberal Democrat to conservative Republican. But he never abandoned his hatred of nuclear weapons and his desire to eliminate them. Reagan's "dream," as he himself described it, was "a world free of nuclear weapons." However, Reagan's foreign policy is characterized by a staunchly anti-communist stance. While he did draw up the “Star Wars” Plan earlier this year, involving lasers and other technologies for early intervention in the time of nuclear warfare, it involves technology that is decades ahead of it’s time. Therefore, in the fight against communism, his noble dream may have to be put on hold to protect the U.S. and its allies.
Looking now to the future, you must make decisions during this critical time in history regarding the future of nuclear energy. Should the U.S., and indeed the world continue its arms race? Is the sake of having an arsenal worth the pressure it is putting on international political relations? The cabinet is looking to come to a conclusion on how the U.S. will begin the rest of its existence. A coherent plan, whether that is to continue the use of nuclear weaponry or to abolish its existence entirely, should be drawn up with haste.

Questions to consider

1. How can the mistakes made during the creation of the Baruch Plan be circumvented now when trying to reach international agreement?
2. Will atomic energy be made obsolete altogether, or will there be an attempt to regulate peaceful uses for it?
3. What will the continuation of nuclear buildup mean politically?
4. To what extent is the public’s important but uninformed opinion on the cold war and nuclear energy going to effect decision-making?
5. Do the chickens have large talons?
6. Will nuclear weapons be phased out once there is no longer an apparent need for them? Who decides?

Helpful Links


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-granoff/president-ronald-reagan_b_1927491.html

Background

The stability of Grenada and its subsequent government for the past several years has been fragile, to say the least. American intelligence forces have suspected that Grenada served as a communist buffer zone at the time and was subsidiary to Cuban and U.S.S.R. control. For many months now tensions between the U.S. government and its Grenadian counterpart have been running high. As of October 23rd the Grenadian President Maurice Bishop was overthrown in a coup by a member of his own government, Bernard Coard, who later executed Bishop. A large point of controversy between the two nations is the establishment of a landing strip that Grenadians claim was built to boost tourism whereas the U.S. government believes that this strip is a Cuban/Soviet military enterprise.

If this strip is confirmed as a military venture it will be considered an immediate and direct threat to national security. It is also important to note that there are 1,000 American medical students living on the island and if the strip is indeed determined to be utilized for Communist purposes then it poses a serious risk for those U.S. residing on the island as well as back in the States. The Reagan administration recently received a notice from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States to intervene and protect the students.

In addition, it is also of utmost importance to consider the Beirut bombing of the 200 U.S. Marines who lost their lives in this unprecedented terrorist attack that also took place on October 23rd. The situation in Grenada needs to be addressed immediately and it is up to you as members of the Ronald Reagan administration to determine what military action, or perhaps, if any needs to be taken in order to eliminate all threats to both nation and global security. It will be extremely valuable to take all of these events into consideration to decide on whether or not a potential military invasion into Grenada will be both successful and worth the risk.
Progressive vs. Cautious Approach?

There are a myriad of factors to consider before making such a significant decision to utilize military action in Grenada or not. Vietnam and its failures is one such factor to bear in mind as the end those horrors only eclipsed eight years ago from today. Consider former U.S. National Security Advisor under President Nixon and Chief Diplomat under President Ford, Henry Kissinger’s statement on his thoughts regarding the Vietnam conflict:

“I regretted that what should have been straightforward disagreements over the U.S. approach to Vietnam became transmuted into a moral issue – first about the moral adequacy of American foreign policy altogether and then into the moral adequacy of America. To me, the tragedy of the Vietnam war was not that there were disagreements – that was inevitable, given the complexity of the (conflict) – but that the faith of Americans in each other became destroyed in the process, I am absolutely unreconstructed" on that point. I believe that most of what went wrong in Vietnam we did to ourselves," adding, "I would have preferred another outcome – at least another outcome that was not so intimately related to the way that we tore ourselves apart."

The Vietnam War has produced a multitude of unforeseen negative consequences prior to the start of U.S. intervention and it must be taken into consideration in regards to whether or not we should pursue invading Grenada.

It is of the utmost magnitude to weigh all options considerably before making any hardline decisions. It is also up to you members of the administration to determine whether or not you will be involving members of Congress or the Senate in the particulars of your decision-making process therefore you all need to elect to inform the American public of your decision or not. Thus, you must come to a consensus on how military action (if agreed upon to be used) will be implemented and what fallout could occur from the international community. The bottom line that everyone must decide upon is: whether or not Grenada is a major enough threat to U.S. security in terms of Communist leanings. And if so, will this conquest’s success outweigh endangering the lives of American soldiers in another foreign military expenditure so quickly post Vietnam.
Consequently, each and every one of you delegates must consider how your individual positions and opinions will factor into this topic. Will you propose a tactical strike or weigh your options and consider potential diplomatic solutions? A decision must be made and it appears that Grenada is a very serious threat to safety of the U.S. A plan of action must be proposed to President Reagan, as it is your job to resolve this unfolding crisis with poise, dignity, and integrity that encompasses the United States of America.

Questions to consider

1. Do the bureaucratic bodies of Congress and the Senate deserve to be included into this discussion?
2. Is this call for military action warranted or just a show of force to compensate for Vietnam’s failures?
3. How will a military operation take place? Which branches of the military will plan what accordingly?
4. Is Pakistan even a real country?
5. Should the U.S. take over the Grenadian government?
6. Are the citizens of Grenada now our moral responsibility if we choose to invade the island?
7. Should the media/public be informed?
8. What consequences could the U.S. face from the international community (specifically the United Nations) in regards to invading a nation that has not taken any steps to acting with violence against us?

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Bibliography

