

UPDATED: December 17TH, 2023



TRITONMUN CRISIS GUIDE

MODEL UNITED NATIONS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

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INTRO TO THE COMMITTEE

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What is Crisis?

Crisis committees, such as the ones here at TritonMUN XXVII, are built around the concept that the problems we are dealing with are alive and ever-evolving. Unlike a General Assembly committee where changes to the status quo are only introduced at the end of the committee in the form of resolutions, the many directives from each and every delegate influence not only the progression of the crisis committee but the state of the issue itself. To this, each delegate does not represent a country or organization, but the interests of a single individual. In this sense, each delegate has far more power than delegates in other committees, as their decisions actively influence the decisions of others.

This means that crisis committees are typically much more fast-paced than normal committees, with delegates passing in and out of caucus and voting blocks extremely quickly when in relation to the general assembly or specialized committees. Because of this, crisis committees are geared towards action rather than the debate-styled frameworks of other MUN committees.

When it comes to representing a character, a delegate in crisis is not restricted to the opinions of their specific persona. Delegates can decide what arc their character takes, whether it be following their established personality and goals to the letter or deviating completely. This allows some truly diverse and creative solutions to problems in crisis, feeding into the very nature of crisis itself.

All in all, crisis committees are a place to “let loose” and bring out your creative side in solving issues. While other delegations must stick to a rigid format, crisis’s lax framework gives each delegate the opportunity to form their own story, either apart from everyone, or together as one. What your story will be is your decision to make.

The Pieces of a Crisis Committee

Beyond the concept of a “live-action” committee itself, several distinct pieces of a crisis committee exist that are essential to its function. In order from least to most complex, those pieces are; background guides, personal directives, joint directives, group directives, your crisis arc, and finally committee flow.

Position Papers

Position papers for Crisis committees are very different, both in form and purpose, than one you might be used to writing for a General Assembly or specialized committee. The length of your position paper should be restricted to no more than two pages, 12 point font, double spaced. When it comes to content, the main difference is that instead of representing the views or policy of your country or organization, you will lay out the wants and desires of your character in the setting of the Crisis. While writing in character within your position paper, you will also lay out your intended character arc, or what you hope to achieve by the end of the committee. Remember, while the characters you will play have their own listed motivation, it is ultimately up to you and your actions in committee where your arch goes and how the crisis will evolve.

Personal Directives/Personal Crisis Notes

Personal directives, also known simply as your crisis notes, are the main expression of your character’s actions and abilities. Before each conference starts, delegates in crisis should receive a background guide which explains their character’s goals and gives them a list of “portfolio powers” that can be used to forward their personal goals. Take into consideration, however, that your power and abilities are not limited to portfolio powers given and can be expanded.

To make use of these powers, write a note in your notepad, (most delegates tend to take this time to write in character) which could be provided to you at the start of the committee, detailing what you wish to happen and a plan on how to achieve it. When the crisis staff comes around to

collect these notes, they will take the pads to a backroom where the staff will be able to write a response and return it. Remember, depending on what was attempted and how thought-out the crisis note was will determine how successful the action is. For example, if you are moving soldiers from one place to another, it would be a good idea to specify just how many soldiers and any special accommodations given to them. Keep in mind that your notes are secret, but can still affect the information given in any update given by the staff.

Joint Personal Directives

Joint personal directives, or JPDs, are notes created by more than one delegate and are exclusively between the signatories of the directive. JPDs layout how all characters involved will contribute to a specific goal and benefit from it. Like a normal crisis note, all parties specify what is going to happen and how, including resources from each character involved, and each person signs onto it. In order for a JPD to be accepted, however, all characters involved must sign their name at the bottom of the note-pad page. While the delegates involved might sacrifice some secrecy, they do gain more power in the action and thus a greater chance for success.

Group Directives

Usually formed in response to crisis updates, group directives are what drive a committee forward. They are usually what is debated in the committee and are formed by one or two individual delegates, before being passed around the committee for other delegates to sign onto. Chairs will specify how many sponsors and signatories are needed before a vote can be carried out on the directive. Chairs might also place a cap on how many directives will be accepted to cut down on voting block time.

One important thing to note is group directives are not like resolutions seen in general assembly committees, as they are formed as a quick response or solution to a rapidly changing situation. It is necessary for the flow of the committee to vote quickly on these directives. As such, group

directives are not expected to be formally written, rather they are usually bullet-pointed plans laid out together. Once a directive is passed, crisis staff will then inform the committee of the effects the directive had in the next update.

Crisis Arcs

Crisis arcs represent goals and objectives of different characters in the committee. Beyond the established objectives of the characters, personal crisis arcs can include anything from removing the government and taking over as dictator, to single handedly establishing your own empire and retiring to a massive island with your riches. It is important to consider, however, that such arcs should be theoretically reachable within the established circumstances. Also, consider that the arcs of other delegates may influence or directly conflict with yours. This is why it is still so important to work together with your committee beyond just your in-committee caucuses.

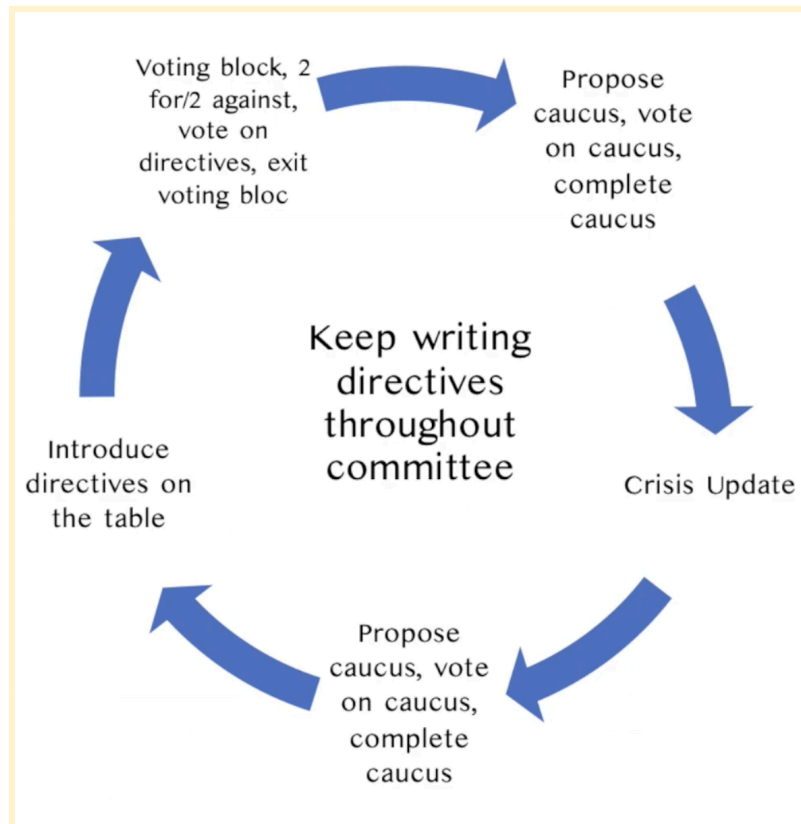
If you don't have a plan to reach the conclusion of your arc, it might be a good idea to do more research, look at other crisis characters and see if they could help you achieve the outcome, or choose an easier goal for your character and personal powers. Remember that what you do in your personal directives and joint directives are essential to accomplish this, since each one counts.

Flow of the Committee

Now that we understand the different parts of a crisis committee, it is time we put them together so you can understand the flow of such a committee.

You will start off like any committee with one delegate proposing a moderated caucus for introduction or any other topic deemed necessary. Soon afterwards, crisis staff will come into the room to give you an update on the situation, where you will then have time to ask questions pertinent to the new circumstances, determining the severity or scope of the update. After this, the chair will call for any points of motion regarding the new situation, at which point you will most likely enter a moderated caucus to discuss. While this is happening, you should be writing

personal and/or joint notes along with group directives throughout the discussion. Once the moderated caucus has elapsed, the committee might enter an unmoderated caucus to formulate joint personal and/or group directives. Once these directives have enough signatures, they can be passed to the chair. While more moderated caucuses might follow as group directives are finalized, the committee can still vote to enter a voting block, where the chair will read out the specifications of the group directives. Delegates will have the ability to speak for and against each directive. Once the directives have passed or failed, they will be submitted to the crisis staff so they can decide the outcome of the next crisis update. From here the process repeats until the suspension or close of the committee itself.



Closing Remarks

Crisis committees are based around the idea that the problems encountered in reality are constantly changing and evolving. They are not static. Due to this, crisis committees are usually the most advanced committees found in conferences. However, they can also be some of the most rewarding, due to their open-ended and free-flowing nature allowing delegates to be as creative as possible.

This year at TritonMUN, we will be having three unique crisis committees, all of which will take place over two days. With this lengthened conference, delegates can develop far longer and more complex crisis arcs than they normally would. And with three committees, delegates have a wider array of choices they can choose from, covering various periods and places in history.

The first is about the Chinese Warlord Era that lasted from 1912 until 1927. In this committee, delegates will represent leaders of different Chinese provinces in the aftermath of the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the rise of the new Republic of China. Delegates will have to guide their provinces through this period of political instability as they face threats from competing warlords, the new Chinese government, and foreign interests who want to shape China for their personal gain.

The second one will be about the Greco-Persian War. In this committee, delegates will be representing the important leaders in the competing city-states of Athens and Sparta as they face a foreign invasion from the mighty Persian Empire. Will delegates follow the path of history, uniting to face down and ultimately defeat this much larger threat. Or will infighting among the alliance destroy it and any hope of victory? It is up to delegates to rewrite history to their benefit.

And lastly, we will have a committee where delegates will represent members of President Nixon's Cabinet during the Watergate scandal. It is 1973 and the news has broken that Nixon tried to wiretap the Watergate hotel for his benefit. Delegates will have to navigate the fallout of this infamous scandal, facing threats from both Congress and Nixon. Sides will be chosen and alliances will be forged as delegates work to save their political futures from this disaster.

While vastly different, all committees will reflect the open-ended and free-flowing nature of crisis committees as delegates work to solve the various crises in these committees and ultimately shape the worlds of their committees, hopefully in their favor. I wish you all the best in these committees and hope you enjoy them.

Nathaniel Wood
