

Triple Cabinet Crisis

Britain 1974: A Kingdom Disunited

Study Guide

9th Session | York Model United Nations



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A Welcome from the Directors

Welcome to the crisis delegate! In the Disunited Kingdom Crisis, the delegates find themselves at a turning point in history, with a difficult task before them. Together they must find a solution to the crisis in Northern Ireland, prevent further bloodshed, avoid Irish intervention, and guide the United Kingdom through the Troubles. In the meantime, each cabinet and delegate have their own objectives. This guide will give an overview of the lead up to the current crisis situation, some basic information on the functioning of crisis. On the day we will be going into more detail and answering any questions you may have. Don't be afraid to reach out to your chairs, or to the directors, for help and advice before the conference if you are struggling.

The primary focus of a crisis is chaotic fun. It's the joy of taking a fixed point in history and ruining the timeline. Of seeing, if everything went just a little crazy, what could have happened. We want to see the best, most imaginative schemes and designs. We have an excellent backroom team who will be working with you to make this an incredible crisis, in the truest sense of the word, and facilitate the madness. Anyone can succeed in crisis, and everyone can fail. The mightiest generals and Prime Ministers can be struck down, and even the lowliest back bencher or civil servant can rise. Be crafty, be cunning, react to opportunities and create your own. If you can think it, and we approve it, it can be done. There is no downtime in crisis, unlike in regular MUN sessions. If you aren't speaking or debating, be writing your next directive or planning it.

So, prepare to face down terrorists, striking workers, nationalist and loyalist upheaval, and most deadly of all, your fellow delegates. Best of luck and see you in Parliament!

Best Regards

The Directors

Joshua and Matej

An Introduction to Crisis

What is crisis? Crisis is different from regular MUN for myriad reasons. The rules of procedure are largely relaxed, delegates can take immediate action and change the world around them in real and profound ways, and in this triple cabinet crisis delegates represent individuals rather than states or organisations. The topic at hand in a crisis will change vastly from the beginning to the end of the crisis, what may start as a small natural disaster worthy of a short debate in a regular MUN committee can spiral into a maelstrom of chaos, with the delegates actions and the backroom's meddling causing rebel uprisings, disease outbreaks, wars, and revolutions; and this could all happen in the first half day session.

For those who have never done crisis before, it can seem like a daunting experience. Yes, crisis is vastly different from regular MUN, but for many reasons this makes it much easier for new or first time MUN delegates. Gone are most of the complex rules and procedures, the standing on ceremony, the passive aggressive put downs, and experienced delegates using their knowledge of the rules to silence their less experienced rivals. In crisis, while not all delegates start equally powerful, much like any MUN committee, every delegate can climb. A shrewd delegate can take advantage of opportunities and turn them to their personal advantage, a diplomatic and persuasive delegate may swing the room in their favour and achieve their goals without getting their hands dirty, and a devious delegate may backstab their way to infamy. The success of any delegate in crisis is limited only by their imagination, and the speed at which they can respond to the series of crisis developments and updates.

The delegates, divided into different cabinets representing different political entities, will compete both against their rival cabinets and against one another. The informal debates within committee will help shape the goals and objectives that the cabinet wishes to pursue, but the real meat of crisis is in directives. Directive writing will be covered more by the director and chairs at the start and during the crisis, but in essence directives are commands to troops, press releases, personal orders and basically enable the delegate to control anything and everything regarding their character in the crisis. They can be issued by the committee as a whole (e.g. when declaring war or peace), by multiple delegates together (e.g. two delegates arranging to buy flowers for a third or kill them) or individually (e.g. issuing orders to troops under your command or deciding to host a party for your pet dog). Directives can cover any and everything. Directives must be approved by the crisis team before they are implemented, but most will be implemented. The success of the directive depends on several things, such as the amount of detail provided, the amount of previous preparation the delegate has made, the scale of the action to be undertaken, and the possible counter-measures other delegates may have put in place.

Technical Details of the Crisis

Characters and Cabinets

Delegates will each be representing a historical individual for the crisis, rather than a country. They could be a politician, a civil servant, a journalist, or a military man. They will have individual remits and powers, depending on their character, which will be detailed in their character summary. Acting as individuals they can only do what their character can do, taking individual decisions based upon their powers and resources or shaping the decisions made by their cabinets. As individuals they can also be arrested, assassinated, or otherwise removed from the crisis if not careful enough. Should this happen the delegate will receive a new character.

All characters are organised into one of three cabinets. Unlike regular MUN cabinets, they will be made up only of individual people not nations. Cabinets will have different powers and remits depending on the position of power they hold, for example the Opposition cannot make official treaties or agreements with foreign nations as they are not in Government, but they can issue promises of new policy in the event they take power to foreign powers.

Parliament/ the Grand Cabinet

YorkMUN's crisis will take place in the setting of the UK Parliament. What this will represent, in practical terms of the crisis, is a type of "Grand Cabinet" that the cabinets are sub-cabinets of. In Parliament sessions, the cabinets will sit and debate in a manner more like traditional MUN, working together or against one another. Parliamentary sessions will be the place for the separate cabinets to come together to work towards a resolution to the crisis, or to play the other cabinets off against one another. Between parliamentary sessions the cabinets will meet alone, enabling them to plan cabinet specific actions. It is in these sessions that the different cabinets will have the opportunity to work together and find common solutions to the crisis topic.

Deus Crisis Software

For this crisis, we will be using Deus Crisis Software. It's a great system that allows much easier and more reliable sending and receiving of directives and replies, and "news updates". We will introduce you all to Deus in the morning of the first day and give you a demonstration.

A recent history of the United Kingdom

The past century was one of great advancement for the United Kingdom. On the 20 June 1837, at the age of 18 after the death of her uncle, William IV, Victoria became queen and reigned for more than 60 years, longer than any other British monarch. Her reign was a period of significant social, economic and technological change, which saw the expansion of Britain's industrial power and of the British empire.

For Ireland however, that journey was not consistently smooth sailing, in September 1845, the potato crop which had previously provided approximately 60% of the nation's food needs, began to rot all over Ireland. The potato blight struck again the following year. What began as a natural catastrophe was exacerbated by the actions and inactions of the British government. It is estimated that about a million people died during the four-year famine, and that between 1845 and 1855 another million emigrated, most to Britain and North America. Nationalists such as John Mitchel came to prominence during the Irish potato famine. In March 1848 he founded a journal, 'United Irishman', which called for Irish independence and gave practical tips on how to attack British troops. Charged under the Treason Felony Act, he was sentenced to 14 years transportation. This episode helped set Irish resistance to British occupation on a more violent path.

In 1869 the Prime Minister disestablishing the church of Ireland, the established Church was Anglican, although only about 3% of the Irish population belonged to it - the vast majority being Roman Catholic. William Gladstone's legislation put church property into the hands of commissioners, who could use it for 'social schemes', including poverty relief and the expansion of higher education. Irish bishops no longer sat in the House of Lords. The act was designed to reduce tensions and increasing lawlessness in Ireland.

In the early 70's, William Gladstone's government made further efforts to ease tensions with the Irish, introducing Ireland's Landlord and Tenant Act, attempting to address a key grievance. The act provided for compensation to tenants evicted by landlords and it gave legal protection to customary tenant right. Tenants were also allowed to purchase their holdings if they could afford the cost.

The appeasement efforts however evidently were of little difference as in May 1882, the recently appointed chief secretary of Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his under-secretary TH Burke were stabbed to death in Phoenix Park, Dublin. The perpetrators were members of the 'Invincible', an extremist branch of the 'Fenian' revolutionary organisation. The murders outraged the public in Britain and, much against his will, provoked Prime Minister William Gladstone into maintaining harsh coercive policies in Ireland. This led to rumours in 1885 that the Prime Minister would support 'Home Rule' for Ireland. Although Gladstone did not confirm the reports, his Liberal government, which returned to office in February 1886, drew up proposals for Home Rule. These provoked cabinet resignations, a split in the Liberal party and a Conservative election victory in July.

In 1902, Arthur Balfour succeeded Lord Salisbury as prime minister. The Conservatives, led by the Marquess of Salisbury, dominated British politics after the Liberals' split over the issue of 'Home Rule' for Ireland in 1886. Salisbury's successor and nephew, Arthur Balfour, shared with his uncle an interest in foreign imperial policy. He was premier for two-and-a-half years when

he tried to expose the divisions within the Liberal opposition by resigning, but his rival Henry Campbell-Bannerman formed a Liberal government and then led it to a smashing success at the polls in January 1906. Armed with an overall majority, the Liberals embarked on a programme of social reform.

With a full decade passed into the 20th century, Victoria's son, Edward VII, died and was succeeded by his son George. Both Edward, and his son, George V, ensured that the monarchy was more active than it had been in the latter years of Victoria's reign, but they exercised their influence discreetly. Edward's funeral brought together the royalty of Europe - many of them his relations - for the last time before war broke out in 1914.

War raged in Europe until 11 November 1918, when Germany signed the armistice. In the first post war election on 14 December 1918, David Lloyd George's coalition won. This was also the first election in which women voted, and the first woman member of parliament Countess Constance Markievicz was elected in.

Although having won 73 seats in the previous election, the next year, The Sinn Fein members of parliament - having refused to take their seats in the British House of Commons - announced that they constituted an independent Irish parliament called the 'Dáil Eireann'. A provisional government was elected with Éamon De Valera as president. The British government promptly outlawed Sinn Fein's Dáil Eireann, sparking a vicious two-year guerrilla war between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in southern Ireland and British forces, which included the hated 'Black and Tan' auxiliaries. With the IRA unable to deliver a decisive victory, and the British government increasingly worried about rising casualties and international criticism over its conduct of the war, a truce was called in July 1921, when the Anglo-Irish Peace Treaty is signed, resulting in partition of the island. This treaty ended the war between the breakaway southern Irish Republic and Britain, and was supposed to resolve the sectarian 'Ulster problem' by partitioning Ireland. It turned southern Ireland into a dominion - rather than a republic - called the 'Irish Free State', with the British sovereign as head of state. The fact that the treaty still bound Ireland to Britain caused deep conflict and led to the outbreak of the Irish Civil War. The pro-treaty faction under Michael Collins accepted partition and believed the treaty would eventually lead to a republic. The anti-treaty faction, led by Éamon de Valera, rejected partition and wanted a republic immediately. The war ended in victory for the pro-treaty Free State government under Collins (who was assassinated) but caused lasting bitterness. Éamon de Valera, now created the Fianna Fáil party to participate in its political life. Fianna Fáil members elected to the Free State's Dáil (parliament) initially refused to take their seats unless the oath of allegiance to the British sovereign was abolished. Faced with exclusion from politics, Fianna Fáil eventually took the oath, dismissing it as an 'empty formula'.

In 1937, with the British government distracted with Edward VIII's constitutional crisis and German rearmament, De Valera seized the opportunity to draw up a new constitution for Ireland that omitted any references to its place within the British Empire. In addition to making Ireland a de facto republic, the constitution laid claim to the whole of Ireland, including Ulster. De Valera became the 'Taoiseach', the equivalent of prime minister. Essentially making Ireland a republic in all but name.

With the end of the war, and significant decolonisation, Britain sought to ease conflict with the Irish, The Republic of Ireland Act (1948) came into force on Easter Monday, April 1949, ending vestigial British authority in Eire. Under the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the British

crown had retained some authority in the Irish Free State, although this was limited by the 1937 constitution. The 1948 Act repealed the External Relations Act and took Eire out of the Commonwealth.

On 6th February 1952, Princess Elizabeth was in Kenya when news of her father's death reached her. She immediately returned to Britain and was crowned on 2 June 1953. Elizabeth II proved an experienced and skilful adviser of successive prime ministers but was careful to main constitutional conventions and not take a political stand publicly.

In April 1955, Winston Churchill was by now 80 and his health was declining. He was succeeded as prime minister by Anthony Eden, who had also served as Churchill's Foreign Secretary and was widely recognised as his 'heir apparent'. The Conservatives won the general election again that May, with Anthony Eden as prime minister. The Suez Crisis of 1956 however ruined Anthony Eden's reputation and fatally compromised his political career. His health seriously diminished as a result. His successor, Harold Macmillan, had been chancellor of the exchequer under Eden. Macmillan was the third Conservative prime minister in as many years. October 1963 however once again saw a change in conservative leadership as Sir Alec Douglas-Home became Conservative party leader and prime minister following the resignation of Harold Macmillan on health grounds.

It was finally in October 1964, at the general election that Labour narrowly won, with Harold Wilson as the new Prime Minister. The conservatives then regained their majority once again in 1970, with Edward Heath taking over as prime minister with suggestion that voters had turned against Harold Wilson, rather than towards the uncharismatic Edward Heath.

The Troubles

Although there is a degree of historical dispute as to the exact start date of the Troubles, this guide shall use the so called “Battle of the Bogside” and wider Northern Irish riots in mid-August 1969 as a start date of the conflict. This incident precipitated the deployment of British troops on the 14 August 1969 and the creation of the paramilitary organisation which would become the main combatant on the nationalist side of the conflict, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in December of 1969.

The “Battle of the Bogside” was so named for the Bogside neighbourhood of Derry (officially Londonderry) where it took place. On 12 August, a loyalist organisation, the Apprentice Boys of Derry, marched along the outskirts of the overwhelmingly catholic Bogside. After an exchange of insults and missiles between local residents and the Apprentice Boys, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), backed by loyalist groups, attempted to storm the neighbourhood, leading to a large two day riot. The “battle” involved the use of CS gas, petrol bombs, armoured cars and water cannons, with at least 1,350 people being estimated to have been injured. This incident led to a string of other disturbances, including riots in Belfast during which a nine year old boy was killed in a nationalist district, after the RUC opened fire on a flat block with Browning machine guns. By the time of the British intervention, eight people had been shot dead in the rioting.

By late 1969, the two major armed belligerents on the nationalist side which would shape the first three years of the conflict had emerged. Due to division in the ranks of the IRA, the Provisional IRA emerged in December 1969, formed of an army council of more militant and younger members, mostly disenchanted with the traditional IRA leadership over Sinn Fein's decision to end its policy of abstentionism in the British and both Irish legislatures. The PIRA would go on to be the larger and more violent of the two factions, and is by far the better known.

The other organisation was the remains of the IRA prior to the PIRA's departure, who would be broadly known from then on as the Official IRA (OIRA) or occasionally the Red IRA, to reflect the groups Marxist politics, increasingly prominent throughout the 1960s. Socialist politics had been prevalent in the anti-treaty forces during the Civil War and stemmed back broadly to the political beliefs of famous Irish republican James Connolly, a founder of the Industrial Workers of the World and leader of the Irish Citizen Army, who had been executed following the Easter Rising of 1916.

The Nationalist community initially favoured British intervention, believing them to be more trustworthy and impartial than the RUC but relations soon deteriorated after a number of PR blunders and the advent of the Falls Curfew in July 1970, which would turn into a three day street battle between 3,000 British soldiers and OIRA and PIRA militants.

Through to 1972 political violence escalated in both communities. Many nationalist areas of major cities were blocked off through the use of barricades, including the area of the Bogside riots in Derry, which became known as “Free Derry”, these “no-go areas” for the most part, lay outside the control of the British army and the Northern Irish authorities.

1972 would prove the worst year of the conflict in terms of loss of life. Nearly five hundred people, over half of them civilians, would die over the course of the year in Troubles related violence.

The worst and most famous such incident was the massacre of Bloody Sunday on 30 January 1972. The shooting occurred during an anti-internment march, again in the Bogside neighbourhood of Derry, when members of the British Army's 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment (1 Para) opened fire on unarmed protestors, killing fourteen.

The build up to the incident stemmed from the banning of all protests, from 18 January 1972, by Northern Irish Prime Minister Brian Faulkner. 1 Para had already used rubber bullets against and severely beaten members of a similar anti-internment protest march on 22 January 1972. The official British Army and Government position on Bloody Sunday was that soldiers reacted to attacks from IRA members with guns and nail bombs. All other witnesses maintained that the soldiers had fired into an unarmed or fleeing crowd. The incident provoked a wide backlash against the British Army and Government and against its policies in Northern Ireland.

With the situation deteriorating and British troops numbers in Northern Ireland increasing, it became the opinion of the London government that the devolved Northern Irish government was incapable of handling the situation. Despite opposition from the Northern Irish, unionist controlled executive and legislature, the British government imposed direct rule from 30 March 1972, suspending the Northern Irish government through an emergency act of parliament.

May 1972 also saw the Official IRA broadly drop out of the conflict. Its leadership had never fully supported a military campaign, and following several armed actions which had political damaging consequences, including the deaths of several civilians and two catholic members of British Army personnel, the OIRA called a ceasefire in May 1972, which was never revoked. From then on, the Provisional IRA would be the undisputed major belligerent on the nationalist and catholic side.

The Deteriorating Security Situation

Overview

1973 saw the British government attempting to politically re-legitimise the Northern Irish regime and broader settlement through first a March referendum on the status of Northern Ireland. 98.9% of the 58.7% turnout of eligible voters cast their ballots to remain in the UK as opposed to joining in a United Ireland, though republicans and nationalist officials boycotted the vote. In June of 1973 elections were held for a new legislative body for the country, the Northern Ireland Assembly, which secured a majority for unionist parties.

In October of 1973, the Sunningdale Agreement was negotiated by the British and Irish governments, along with mainstream nationalist and unionist political parties in Northern Ireland. The Agreement provided for power sharing in the Northern Irish executive, along with the creation of a “Council of Ireland” of ministers from north and south, to provide for cross border Irish co-operation. Unionists were split on the agreement, whilst militant nationalist forces like the PIRA opposed the agreement as they refused to negotiate anything less than the non-existence of Northern Ireland as a separate entity to the Republic. However, the words of some moderate nationalist politicians, which indicated they felt that Sunningdale was a backdoor to a United Ireland, severely hurt unionist support for the deal.

Two further factors led to the seeming inevitability of the defeat of Sunningdale by May 1974. At the UK General Election in February of 1974, running on a slogan of “Dublin is only a Sunningdale Away”, candidates opposed to the deal won 11 of the 12 Northern Irish seats and 58% of the vote. Three organisations were created to facilitate resistance: The Ulster Workers Council, formed from loyalist trade union bodies; the United Ulster Unionist Council, to bring together Unionist politicians; and the Ulster Army Council, a body including the UDA and UVF and many other paramilitaries, with the aim of creating a 20’000 strong “Army of Ulster” and enforcing Northern Ireland’s independence from the Republic, even if by force.

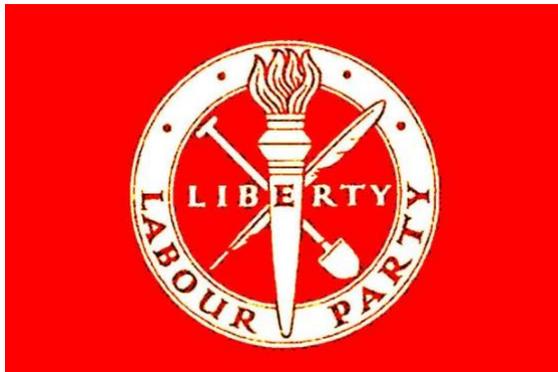
On the 14th of May, 1974, the UUUC and the UWC declared a general strike, enforced and bolstered by paramilitary action by the UAC. Public transport ground to a halt, the local government has largely collapsed, violence has swept the streets, and the political stalemate has heated up.

The Strikes

The date is the 20th May 1974. The Ulster Workers’ Council Strike has crippled Northern Ireland. The newly negotiated Sunningdale Agreement is jeopardy. Car bombs three days prior have killed 33 civilians and injured over 300 more, and the Loyalist paramilitaries have established roadblocks. Coming so shortly on the heels of Harold Wilson’s election, and the nature of his minority government, this poses the single most serious threat to his leadership and possibly the survival of his government. Parliament meets to address this crisis, with fears of escalation.

The Parties

Her Majesty's Government – Labour Party



Aligned with the socialist international, and committed to a worker's takeover of the means of production, the labour party represents the socialist and moderate left in the United Kingdom. Led by Harold Wilson, the current Labour Government struggles with allegations of Soviet influence and a lacklustre mandate from the recent elections.

Seats: 307

Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition – Conservative Parties



The Conservative Party believe in the old way, fighting for a strong Britain, united and proud in the world. The Conservatives represent the centre to moderate right of British politics, with some reactionary elements. Despite receiving more votes than Labour in the recent election, their concentrated support lost them the election. The party is old however, and its influence runs deep. What clout it may lack in parliament it more than makes up for in the halls of Whitehall.

Seats: 297

Unaligned MPs and Minority Parties



The Liberal Party, the SNP, and the UUP represent the remaining parties in Parliament. The Liberal Party represents those for whom the Conservatives are too far right, and labour too far left. They are consummate centrists. Meanwhile, the UUP and the SNP are polar opposites. The UUP are a right-wing loyalist party in Northern Ireland, who tacitly support the Ulster Workers Strike and have links to paramilitaries. The SNP are a Social-Democratic party that seeks an independent Scotland. These parties sit together in

parliament as part of neither HM Government or HM Most Loyal Opposition.

Seats: Liberals: 14. UUP: 7. SNP: 7.

The Cabinets

Cabinet One: Her Majesty's Government

The first cabinet shall represent Harold Wilson's Labour Party Government. They won less votes in the most recent election, but due to the UK's electoral system ended up in power as a minority government. Their remit is weak, and their Parliamentary lead over the conservatives is wafer thin. The Northern Ireland crisis poses the single greatest threat to the government at present, and their utmost priority must be to find a negotiated solution that appeases the Loyalist and Nationalist factions in Northern Ireland, avoids Irish intervention, and maintains their hold on power.

Cabinet Two: Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition and other Opposition Parties

The second cabinet is made up both of the Official Opposition representatives of the minor parties of Parliament. Robbed of the most recent election, the conservatives are still smarting from their unjust defeat. They will use the crisis to their advantage and try and level themselves back into power. Sitting on the same side of the isle are the Liberals, UUP, and SNP. The Liberals are unsure of their support in this parliament, but recognise their power as kingmakers. Whoever they chose to back will be that much closer to majority. The UUP will attempt to use the crisis on hand to strengthen their position, pushing for greater powers for the Loyalist establishment in Northern Ireland and capitulation to the demands of the strikers. The SNP will be watching the crisis carefully, waiting for any sign of giving in to regionalist demands, and using such acts to push their campaign for devolution and eventual independence.

Cabinet Three: Civil Society

The final "extra-parliamentary" cabinet is not made of MPs, but rather concerned citizens, powerful men regardless of their lack of a seat in Parliament. From the halls of Whitehall, to the helm of newspapers, with blood as old as Britain and money beyond imagining, these men stand ready to serve their country and themselves as is necessary. Behind the pomp and grandeur of the chamber of the commons, it is with these men that the true art of politics is carried out. Currying the favour of this cabinet will be essential for whoever seeks to resolve the Northern Irish crisis to their own interest, as the support of these powerful private citizens will be vital to the success of any politician be they Government or Opposition.

Conclusion

May 1974, the UK teeters on a knife-edge. Riots wrack Northern Ireland and car bombs kill and maim in the Republic. With the fascistic National Front are on the rise in London, the spectre of Enoch Powell's prophesied rivers looms. Members of Wilson's government must strive to maintain their Ministry, while the opposition may seek to use the crisis as a way of returning to power. Civil society and the civil service on the other hand aim to ensure the politicians don't cock everything up even worse than it is. A time of crisis is coming, but what shape it will take is not yet clear. Welcome to the Disunited Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The country's future, and that of its people, is in your hands.