Introduction to Crisis

CWRU MUN- Siddharth Hariharan (2017)
General Layout

- For the typical, small crisis committee:
  - 14 to 22 delegates, seated around a table facing each other
  - Chair, Director, and Crisis Staff/Room (aka “Crisis”)
- Crisis Room
  - Dedicated room with multiple staffers for the crisis committee
  - Keep track of what is going on in committee, respond to crisis notes
  - Delivers crisis updates
Major Differences between a Crisis and a GA

1. Delegates represent characters, not countries (unless in UN Security Council)
2. Committee functions on a “real timeline,” not in a vacuum
3. Committee-wide actions are in the form of directives, not resolutions
4. Delegates write personal crisis notes to the Crisis Staff

● General Differences
  ○ Generally little to no work outside of committee
  ○ You will speak far more often, and speeches are much more off-the-cuff
  ○ Crisis committees are VERY FAST PACED
1. Character, not Country

- It’s finally OK to use “I” as a pronoun!
- Shape goals for committee around your character’s position and powers
- Can stretch the bounds of your character’s personality and policy, within limits

For example:
- If you are an Army General in a government’s cabinet, it’s OK and makes sense for you to be a war hawk and overly in favor of military methods
2. Committee is in Real Time

Crisis: Major events happen multiple times throughout committee (anywhere from every 45 mins to 90 mins)

- Events happen in response to actions taken by the committee and by individuals, in the form of:
  - Newspaper articles and press releases
  - Characters visiting to make announcements and field questions
  - Phone calls, videos, skits
- Therefore, the background guide is usually not useful in predicting crisis updates
- Some events are more major than others
Sample Crisis Update

- This committee was the Cabinet of the United Kingdom
- Secretary Johnson is Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- After this update, he had to convince the British Media and members of the cabinet that he wasn’t implicated in the bomb scare
3. Directives, not resolutions

- Directives are smaller, less formal resolutions
- Committee-wide Action
- Often have a name associated with, and written out as bullet points
- Multiple directives on the floor at almost all times, multiple can pass
  - Generally a good idea to always be working on a directive if you can
- Directives are usually written in during debate, and are rarely over 2 pages (usually half a page to one page)
- Passed around the committee and handed to the chair to read
- HANDWRITTEN
Sample Directive

More detailed directive

1. Every locality shall have a primary school within its borders, with the exception of neighboring localities whose Councils elect to merge their primary schools.

2. Schools shall each receive a minimum amount of funding necessary for administration regardless of locality population, as well as auxiliary funding allocated proportional to locality population.

3. Localities which choose to merge will jointly receive the sum of the individual funding they would otherwise have received.

4. All classes shall be taught in French, but Councils
Sample Directive

Shorter, quick directive

- The more details you have, the better it is!!

1. All communications from Leopold Dossou to actors outside this committee will be read aloud to this cabinet and voted on for our approval.

2. The recruitment of children for homeland security will stop and Mr. Zodkougan will be stripped of his powers.

- Archibishop Isidore de Souza
- Soyle
- R. Dossou
- Milele
- Albert Tseodejne
4. Personal Crisis Notes

Probably the biggest change, crisis is more than just a fast-paced and unpredictable General Assembly.

Each character has portfolio powers, which you can get inventive with.

Write notes to crisis to do things behind the scenes on your own.

You want to explain to crisis what you hope to get out of your crisis note.

These will have an impact on committee:

- Usually not what you expect
- May or may not be attributed to you in committee

Sometimes, crisis won’t let you do stuff, or will willfully misinterpret → DETAILS MATTER

Joint Crisis Note: You and another person both sign on a crisis note. More likely to be accepted.
Crisis 1

It’s 100% ok to communicate with crisis like this. You can write “@crisis” if you don’t know the crisis director (CD)’s name. You’re always trying to figure out what role crisis wants you to play (arc). Here, looking for suspicious documents wasn’t really what they wanted, but now I knew what they did want.
Crisis 2

In the very next note, I followed their instructions to get more aggressive and try to affect all of committee, and went after the rogue military leader. If this hadn’t been the kind of thing they wanted, I’d have had to probe some more via crisis actions until I found the right direction. Crisis indicates the wrong direction with “no”, “your action failed/may accomplish nothing” or “ok” which means “ok but this won’t change anything”
Crisis Note Systems

Notes system: Just send tons of notes and get individual responses back.

- Good idea to ask crisis how often they want you to send notes.

Pad system: Write all your notes on a pad, collected at intervals.

- Sometimes you will have two pads, so you can be working on notes at all times and switch them out.
Typical flow of crisis committee (loop)

- Major crisis event (we’re under attack!)
- General moderated caucus (what should we do?)
- While speeches are going, people scribble down directives.
- Directives get passed around, signed, handed to chair.
- Introduce directives, which are read aloud by the chair (take notes!)
- Moderated talk about directives
- Unmod to merge directives (only if there are contradictory clauses preventing the ones we want to pass from being passed immediately)
- Re-introduce and vote on merged directives

Round robins are used in situations where having each person speak would be better than having a debate, i.e. to find out what everyone thinks.

Straw polls are occasionally used to get consensus on a direction.

Friendly amendments and dividing the question are quite common.
Winning in Crisis

Things to understand:

1. Achieve the goals of your character, not the goals of committee.

1. There’s no single strategy to win.
1. Character goals, not committee goals.

GA: Your country has little goals, but in general the committee is united. Even North Korea isn’t going to be against fighting Ebola, it's all details.

Crisis: If you’re a traitor, you want to stop the room at all costs, and that’s a GOOD THING.

What does your character want? You’re rewarded for representing that.

- Maybe you’re a good guy and want the committee to succeed. So do that.
- Maybe you’re a bad guy and want to attack people in speeches, vote everything down, and disrupt any passed directives via crisis notes.
- Maybe you have your own agenda and will help some things but try to stop others.
2. There’s no single strategy to win

Stuff you do in crisis links with committee in interesting ways.

Lends itself to all sorts of strategies.

- Play it straight, honestly try to do what’s best for your situation.
- Betray the committee, defend yourself to the death when they find out.
- Build up a political support base and try to be elected president/king.
- Write an insane amount of directives and lead the committee.

Very dependent on what crisis you’re in, the personality of your chair/CD, your own personality, your character.

In general, IMPACT = AWARDS.
The Crisis Director and Crisis Staff: Inside their heads

- They have a plan for how committee should play out (Crisis Arc), and it almost never goes that way
- They’ll try to direct you throughout committee to consider certain issues closer to their intended “arc”
  - **TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY** → many people won’t work in the agenda of the staff, but they are more likely to approve your notes if you do this
- Is responsible for anywhere from 50% to 85% of evaluation and awards selection (other portion will be from Chair)
You can get killed (or imprisoned or exiled) in crisis.

You'll come back as a new character with a new portfolio.

Is it a good thing? No.

It’s a proxy for a good thing, because it usually means you were important.

Usually in a good crisis you won’t get killed unless it’s a big deal.

Often starts with a press release blaming you, committee turns against you, you have to defend yourself.

Reasons it’s bad to be killed:

- You’re not prepared to represent the new character
- People won’t trust you personally, even though you’re a different guy
- Have to rebuild connections, personality, and policy from scratch
Crisis can be fun, but it is also challenging to learn!
Just because you are better at GA than Crisis doesn’t make you a “bad delegate” - just a different kind
The hardest thing about crisis is how DIFFERENT every committee, crisis staff, and conference can be
  - Pay attention to the writing of the background guide and the first hour of committee to see what they may be emphasizing
Come into a committee with your own personal arc, and communicate openly with crisis about it