

BACKGROUND GUIDE
JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE - OPERATION DROPSHOT



January 1st, 1950
ARAVALI MUN 2025

Message from the EB

Greetings delegates, and welcome to the Joint Crisis Committee.

As you all know, the agenda for our committee is Operation Dropshot. Operation Dropshot was a perfect example of how tensions escalated during the cold war, and a reminder to all of us about just how touch-and-go global geopolitics can be.

The cold war was a period of extreme hostility and hatred, many consider it to be amongst the most dangerous times to live in, and all of it started in the late 1940s and early 1950s, with Operation Dropshot being a military plan that came very close to (without exaggeration), ending the world.

This committee will be extremely intense and fast-paced and will require each and every delegate to think on their feet, keeping in mind both diplomacy and their own interests.

This background guide serves as a tool to help you get started with your research, and this does not serve as a substitute for your own research.

Model United Nations, as a concept, seems inconsequential, and unfortunately, it tends to remain that way for most students as well. However, for those who fall in love with it during AMUN, it becomes an integral part of their lives. Our goal as your EB was to try and make each and every delegate in our committee fall in love with MUN just as all of us have.

As your executive board, we have had an extremely positive start to this committee in the form of training sessions, it is extremely rare for an EB to bond with delegates, let alone continuously be on 3 to 4 hour calls with delegates from one bloc, nearly on a daily basis, and we hope that all of you have enjoyed it just as much as we have. We look forward to this positive experience continuing into the final committee as well.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in committee,
Siddhartha Dennis George, Jai Kashyap, Medhya Saini and Saurabhya Puri,
The Executive Board.

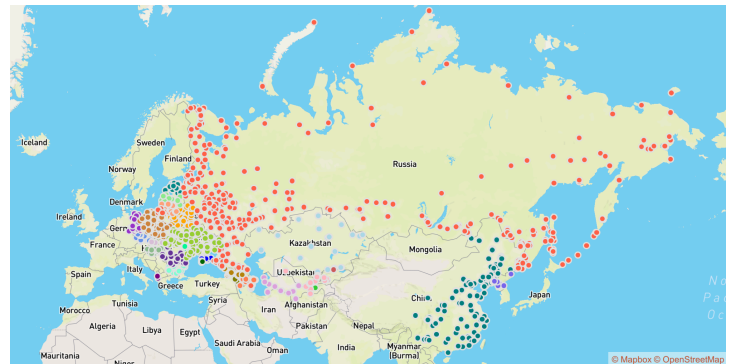
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SUMMARY OF THE AGENDA

Operation Dropshot was a contingency plan designed by the military of the United States to launch a full scale strike on the Soviet Union during the height of the cold war. This operation was to only take place as a counter to a Soviet offensive, and was never used in reality. However, our committee has an important twist: a spy has leaked this plan to the Soviets, it has been interpreted not as a counter, but rather as a plan that America seeks to implement to cripple the Soviet Union.

The plan aims to cripple the Soviet industrial backbone through a massive ground and aerial offensive. Directly quoting de-classified CIA files, the plan states, "profiles that would have used 300 nuclear bombs and 29,000 high-explosive bombs on 200 targets in 100 cities and towns to wipe out 85 percent of the Soviet Union's industrial potential in a single stroke." Additionally, the plan included a broader strategy involving holding "the British Isles, North Africa, India, China and



Japan, from whence strategic air operations could be launched, while the Navy blockaded the Soviet Union's ports. Instead of direct ground invasion, as had been seen in World War 1, World War 2 and most regional conflicts, this plan involved holding strategic choke-points for trade and commerce. The image given shows cities that the United States intended to target through this operation

In our committee, the Soviets have access to this plan, and have already responded by sending two S-class and M-class submarines to Alaska and the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii and California (on the 2nd of December, 1949), which have blocked trade by mining the ports and are also destroying merchant ships. Based on the United States' intelligence, this seems to only be the beginning of a broader plan by the Soviets to attack the United States, and the world now seems to be on the brink of war.

The freeze date of this committee is January 1st, 1950

It is worth noting that in 1949, the Soviet Union also started developing its nuclear arsenal; it possesses 'fat man' type bombs, similar to the ones the United States used at Trinity and dropped over Nagasaki.

Additionally, delegates must keep in mind that intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) did not exist in 1950, which would have invalidated this entire plan.

HISTORY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNION

The United States had been allies during World War 2, following Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941; however, it must be noted that this was always a "marriage of convenience", and following the war, tensions between these two countries heightened for various reasons:

1. **Leadership:** Truman, the president of the United States was much more aggressive than Roosevelt had been and was also confrontational while Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union was paranoid and saw threats everywhere
2. **Ideology:** The Soviet Union was a communist state that believed capitalism was inherently exploitative and needed to be replaced globally. The United States was a capitalist democracy that viewed communism as a threat to individual freedom and free markets. While both capitalism and communism seem to be economic policies, it must be noted that following one over the other led to a completely different system of how a country would be organised, which led to both the US and USSR spreading propaganda to attempt to get other countries to implement their economic policies
3. **Control of Europe:** Both powers wanted to shape post-war Europe according to their interests. Stalin wanted a buffer zone of friendly (communist) states in Eastern Europe to prevent future invasions of Russia. The US wanted democratic, market-oriented allies that would be integrated into the Western economic system. This led to direct conflicts over Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other Eastern European countries.
4. **Nuclear Weapons:** Until 1949, the US had a monopoly on nuclear weapons, which meant they held a massive advantage over any other country if a war broke out. However, after Stalin accelerated the Soviet nuclear program, by 1949, even the USSR had nuclear weapons. This arms race poisoned relations.
5. **Broken Agreements:** Both the United States and the Soviet Union felt that the other was breaking various agreements, the USSR felt that the United States was trying to encircle it from both a military and economic perspective, while the US felt that the USSR was not following the principle of free and fair elections in Eastern Europe and was also following aggressive expansionism
6. **Economic Competition:** The United States implemented the Marshall Plan in 1947, which gave massive aid to attempt to rebuild western Europe following the second world war. However, it clearly left out Soviet controlled areas, which Stalin believed was a move to try and create economic dependencies on America and also to try and spread economic imperialism, which led to the USSR creating its own economic bloc

CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION

Although the USA and the USSR were not involved in any direct wars before 1950, there were several other 'proxy battles and conflicts' or incidents that led to rising tensions between the two nations:

1. **Greek Civil War (1946-1949):** This was the first major Cold War proxy conflict. Communist Greek forces (backed by Yugoslavia, Albania, and indirectly the Soviet Union) fought against the Greek government forces supported by Britain and then the United States. The Truman Doctrine emerged directly from this conflict in 1947, establishing the US policy of containing communist expansion.
2. **Iranian Crisis (1946):** Soviet forces occupied northern Iran after WWII and refused to withdraw by the agreed deadline, while supporting separatist movements there. The US backed Iran diplomatically, and the Soviets eventually withdrew under pressure - this is often considered one of the first Cold War confrontations.
3. **Berlin Blockade (1948-1949):** The Soviet Union blockaded all land access to West Berlin, trying to force the Western Allies out. The US and Britain responded with the Berlin Airlift, flying supplies into the city for nearly a year. This was a major crisis that brought the superpowers to the brink of conflict.
4. **Chinese Civil War (1945-1949):** While not direct US-Soviet combat, both superpowers heavily supported opposing sides. The Soviets backed Mao's Communists with equipment and advisors, while the US provided massive aid to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists.
5. **Poland and Eastern Europe (1945-1948):** Though not armed conflicts, there were major political confrontations as the Soviets installed communist governments across Eastern Europe while the US protested and tried to maintain influence.



DOCTRINES AND POLICIES

The Truman Doctrine:

The Truman Doctrine was a foreign policy adopted by the United States in 1947, with the primary aim being to prevent the spread of communism by "committing the nations to support all free peoples". Here, the nation refers to the USA, and free peoples refers to all countries that are

resisting communism or fighting oppression by communist nations (primarily the Soviet Union). The Truman Doctrine marked a considerable policy shift for the United States, which earlier followed a policy that could almost be described as isolationism. This new policy was often referred to as 'containment', as it attempted to prevent the spread of communism beyond Eastern Europe. The Truman Doctrine was the foundation to the United States' cold war policy and strategy. It was first used in Greece and Turkey, where the United States provided military, political and economic support to prevent communist takeover.

Marshall Plan:

The Marshall Plan, formally known as the European Recovery Program was a program in which the United States gave aid to European nations following World War 2. The primary aim of this aid was to rebuild war-torn nations and to prevent the spread of communism. It was implemented in 1948, and resulted in over 13.3 billion United States dollars being given as aid to these nations. Although aid was initially given to both eastern and western European nations, with time, more aid was given to western European nations.

The USSR constantly criticised the plan as areas under communist influence were left out, and they also claimed that it was an attempt by the United States to create economic dependencies, calling it a form of 'economic imperialism'.

Cominform:

The Cominform, also known as the Communist Information Bureau was created in 1947, to coordinate the activities of all communist nations and parties in Europe under the leadership of the Soviet Union. It allowed the USSR to exert influence and even control communist movements in other European nations, which helped present a unified front against capitalism and the USA. Cominform was spearheaded by Stalin (reportedly with much opposition within the Soviet leadership as well). It represented a more aggressive soviet stance against the west and its allies. It consisted of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Romania.

Satellite States:

During the cold war, satellite states were those countries in Eastern Europe that were formally independent but were heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. The parties governing these countries were generally a part of the Cominform. These countries were often called satellite states because they were said to be 'orbiting the Soviet Union', dependent on it from a political, economic and military perspective and also subject to its control with respect to the same. These states included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and East Germany, with the USSR ensuring that pro-Soviet governments came into power in all of these countries. The soviet union used these states to create a buffer zone between itself and western Europe, thereby ensuring its security by preventing invasion. The satellite states were key in the creation of the western and eastern blocs

NATO:

An important milestone in this conflict was also the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1947. NATO, as of 1950 consisted of the USA, Canada, France, the UK, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. NATO was crucial during the cold war because NATO functioned on the principle of collective defence, i.e. according to Article 5 of the NATO charter, an attack on one NATO country meant an attack on all of the NATO countries. The formation of NATO deterred soviet expansion into western Europe, which was also one of the fundamental reasons for the creation of the iron curtain. Additionally, it is important to note that the USSR did not have an opposition to NATO. The Warsaw Pact was only created in 1955, and as of 1950, there was no communist country that was powerful except for China (which was in the middle of a civil war at that time).

ANALYSIS OF MILITARY STRENGTH

United States of America

The United States, as of January 1950 had 400 nuclear weapons in its arsenal. These nuclear weapons were of two main types:

1. Mark III or 'fat man': These were Plutonium implosion-type bombs which had a yield of 21 kilotons, i.e. one bomb had the same effect as 21,000 tonnes of TNT
2. Mark IV (shown in image): It was an improved 'fat man' design with higher efficiency and efficacy. The Mark III weighed 5.15 tonnes, while this new and improved design weighed much less, at 2.7 tonnes. Additionally, its effect was variable, between 1 and 31 kilotonnes.



The 'little boy' type designs, such as the ones used on Hiroshima were not largely produced due to its inefficacy and also due to Uranium scarcity.

The nuclear weapons were delivered in two main ways:

1. B-36 Peacemaker: The B-36 peacemaker was the United State's primary nuclear delivery platform. It could easily reach Soviet targets from within the United States. It could carry large nuclear weapons or multiple smaller ones. Although it was slow, with an aerial speed of 230 miles per hour cruising speed, it could be heavily defended easily.
2. The B-29 Superfortress bomber: The B-29 had a 3,250 mile combat radius, high for its time. However, it required operational bases close to Soviet territory if it was to bomb the Soviet Union or satellite states. It could carry one Mark III or Mark IV weapon. More than 200 of these bombers were actively available to be deployed

The Soviet Union had tested its first nuclear bomb in 1949, thereby ending the United States' monopoly on nuclear weapons, which had changed the United States' policy. The US now rapidly began deploying its nuclear weapons in strategic locations before the Soviet Union could begin mass production. The United States (if a confrontation were to break out) would target Soviet nuclear facilities to prevent future development, destroy all war production, paralyse soviet logistics (ie transportation) and also attempt to eliminate soviet leadership.

The United States also followed a **first strike policy**, i.e. in a crisis, it would always attempt to strike first, which is especially important in this crisis as due to its stronger nuclear arsenal, it could easily overwhelm Soviet forces. The United States would also attempt to strike before the Soviets could build more nuclear weapons, which led to offensive plans being thought of (such as Operation Dropshot). The massive arsenal of the United States also deterred a conventional attack (without nuclear weapons) from the Soviets

The United States had approximately **1.46 million soldiers** in active duty in January 1950, with 75,000 marines included in this number (marines would prove crucial in regional conflicts seen later during the cold war). It had also recently developed its first operational jet fighter in the form of the **F-80 shooting star**. The United States also had a high-altitude single seater fighter in the form of the **F-86 Sabre**. The United States also had the world's strongest Navy with many carriers, hundreds of cruisers, destroyers, and other surface combatants. Additionally, the US had established bases throughout the world allowing them to project power globally.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

It must be noted that Soviet nuclear capability was significantly weaker than the United State's. Firstly, the Soviet Union had its first successful nuclear test with the RDS-1 "First Lightning" bomb successfully tested in August 1949. In 1950, the Soviet Union had between 5 and 10 nuclear warheads, with production expected to be 1 a month, insignificant compared to the United State's production. The RDS-1 was a nearly identical copy of the United State's Mark III 'fat man' design, with a yield of 22 kilotons, and a weight of 4.6 tonnes. All soviet nuclear weapons were based on this one design

The USSR's primary delivery platform for nuclear warheads was the Tupolev Tu-4 bomber, which was essentially a reverse-engineered B-29 bomber. With a range of 5,400 km it could not reach the United State's mainland. However, it must be noted that it could easily reach locations such as Alaska and Hawaii, both of which had extensive military bases. One of the biggest Soviet weaknesses in 1950 (from a military perspective) was its lack of a bomber that could easily reach the United States.

The USSR followed a policy of using nuclear weapons only in retaliation or if facing an imminent defeat in a confrontation with the United States.

However, when it came to armed personnel, the USSR had an overwhelming advantage over the United States, with approximately 3.2 million soldiers in their armed forces, mostly in the army. The Soviet Air Force was almost as strong as the United States' air force. In terms of jets, the Soviet MiG-15 (shown in the image) was far superior to any US jet and was being produced in overwhelming numbers. The Soviet Air force also had more personnel, with 500,000 as compared to the US' 410,000. Although US air force personnel were more experienced, the soviets were developing an extensive training program for their pilots.



It should also be noted that the satellite states gave the USSR a major advantage, due to the Cominform, and since most of the governments in these countries were puppet governments, the USSR could use their militaries and they also provided a buffer zone between Eastern and western Europe. Similarly, NATO was a major advantage that the United States had over the USSR from a defense perspective.

BLOCS

The two blocs at this time were the capitalist bloc and the communist bloc, and these will be the two blocs in our committee as well. (Details have been given on the neutral bloc as well, although it is not represented in committee)

Capitalist bloc:

The capitalist bloc consisted of NATO as the core alliance. It's important to note that there was an integrated military command under US leadership not only in NATO but also in the entire capitalist bloc. Other important capitalist nations/regions were Japan, Australia and Latin America (following the Rio Pact of 1947).

The key powers in the capitalist bloc were:

1. The USA: In terms of military strength, at this point of time, the USA was the strongest nation in the world and was also strengthened by its European allies (NATO).
2. The UK: The United Kingdom had begun developing its nuclear arsenal (research); however, it had not tested a nuclear weapon yet. Importantly, most of the UK's colonial empire was still intact, and therefore, despite WWII, its economy was still strong
3. France: France, compared to the US and UK was significantly less powerful as it was still recovering from the second world war (as it had been completely occupied by the axis). Additionally, France was also facing decolonization struggles, particularly in Africa, and therefore, was involved in many regional conflicts, resulting in its forces being spread thin

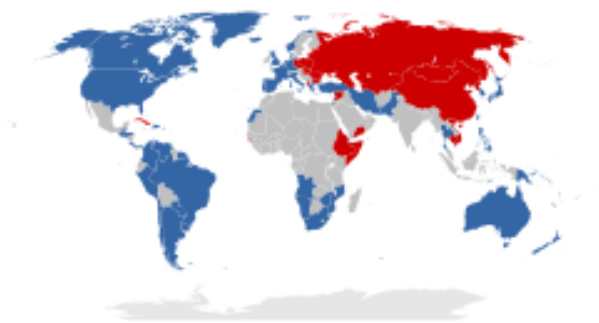
4. West Germany: It was significantly weaker than the other western nations but it served a key purpose in the cold war as it was a point of direct confrontation between the 'west' and the 'east'. Attempts were also being made to add West Germany to NATO.
5. Japan: Japan was occupied by the US at this time (as following World War 2, it had been placed under the control of General McArthur). The United States had ensured that the rebuilt Japan was strongly anti-communist, and it still regained some of its military strength from the second world war, especially from a naval and air perspective

Communist Bloc:

The eastern or communist bloc was spearheaded by the USSR, which as mentioned before, had recently become a nuclear power and was unsurpassed in terms of conventional forces. Additionally, the communist bloc consisted of the eastern european countries, and countries in East Asia. Soviet troops were stationed in almost all of these countries and they did have their own armies as well.

The key powers in the communist bloc at this time were:

1. Soviet Union: In terms of conventional forces, the USSR was the strongest in the world, and importantly, it had a buffer zone in the form of the satellite states
2. Satellite states: These consisted of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany and Albania, it is important to note that all of these countries had armies in the range of 100,000 - 250,000, with soviet officers in important positions, so if this total is added to the Soviet forces, they increase from 3.2 million soldiers to between 4 million and 5.2 million soldiers. Additionally, it is important that all of these nations are very close to one another while the nations that made up NATO did not necessarily share land borders
3. China: After Mao's victory in 1949, China joined the capitalist bloc and by doing this, vastly expanded the bloc as well. A Sino-Soviet Treaty was in the works and reports indicate that it should be signed within the next month. Additionally, China had one of the world's largest standing armies, coming in at 5 million troops; however, this was mostly in the army, with a very minimal air force and navy
4. North Korea: North Korea, with Kim Il Sung in power, was a Soviet client state and its armed forces were fully dependent on China and the USSR. However, it is important that North Korea was a part of this bloc considering the tensions with South Korea along the 38th Parallel



Neutral Bloc:

This mostly consisted of the non-aligned nations such as India, along with countries undergoing de-colonization. These countries did not actively participate in many wars (unless it was a regional conflict); however, they could play an important strategic role if convinced to join one bloc or the other owing to their resources and regional influence.

Note: All numbers given for armed forces in this background guide do not include reserve troops

TIMELINE

- March 5, 1946: Winston Churchill the former British Prime Minister gives the "Iron Curtain" speech which calls attention to the ideological chasm between the Western democracies and the USSR marking the beginning of the Cold War.
- March 2, 1946: The U.S. Joint War Plans Committee releases "Plan Pincher," an antecedent contingency plan for conflict with the Soviet Union, and this plan paves the way for subsequent plans such as Operation Dropshot.
- March 12, 1947: President Harry S. Truman's announcement of the Truman Doctrine, agreeing to underwrite countries resisting communism, thereby escalating the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- April 4, 1949: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is created, with a purpose of alliance between Western states to defend against the Soviet threat.
- August 29, 1949: The Soviet Union makes its first atomic bomb test, accelerating the nuclear arms race and forcing the U.S. to reexamine its military tactics.
- December 19, 1949: Operation Dropshot, sanctioned by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, outlines the dropping of as many as 300 nuclear bombs and 29,000 high-explosive bombs on as many as 200 targets in 100 towns and cities, with the purpose of markedly reducing the Soviet industrial infrastructure.

Events that will take place in our committee's timeline before the freeze date: (these did not take place in reality)

- Late December 1949: An insider within the U.S. Department of Defense discloses details of Operation Dropshot to the Soviet Union, thus breaching the latter's secrecy.

- Early January 1950: Responding to the leaked data, the Soviet Navy deploys submarines in the North Atlantic, to acquire intelligence and determine the nature of Operation Dropshot.

OPERATION DROPSHOT - A DEEP DIVE

Operation dropshot was a contingency plan made by the Department of Defence and Joint Chiefs of Staff, for a possible nuclear and conventional war with the Soviet Union in order to counter an expected Soviet move to take over western Europe, the near East and Asia. The plan called for using 300 nuclear bombs and 29,000 high-explosive bombs on 200 targets in 100 cities and towns to wipe out 85 percent of the Soviet Union's industrial potential in a single stroke. Moscow, Leningrad and other major cities were the primary cities that were targeted in this plan. The plan was simple - achieve a decisive victory through industrial destruction, crippling Soviet war-making capacity before they could effectively mobilize their conventional superiority.

Conventional war plan

American intelligence suggested that the Soviet Union could mobilize 245 divisions, which would be deployed in Western Europe, the Balkans, the middle east and the far east (east asia). The war plans assumed that the conflict would open with a soviet offensive. However, it must be noted that these assumptions were not explicitly mentioned in the war plans.

It should be noted that this plan was developed when the USA still had a nuclear monopoly, which was clearly not the case any longer.

Nuclear war plan

Nuclear weapons would be used on Soviet industries and also to immobilise all Soviet air forces on the ground. Key command and control centers would also be destroyed using nuclear weapons.

The plan also included occupation of Soviet territory by member nations of NATO, with its territory divided in the same manner as West Germany following the second world war

The Twist

In our committee, there is a twist, an American official who had access to the plans for operation dropshot has leaked it to the Soviets. They now know every single detail about the plan. However, they do not know that it is a contingency plan and believe that it is a plan to invade their country. They have responded by sending various S class and M class submarines to Alaska, California and

Hawaii. Please note that these submarines cannot launch nuclear weapons but can destroy entire coastlines with firing, block ports and reduce trade for the United States. The coast guard, thus far, and the US Navy have not managed to find or neutralise these submarines.

A crucial detail to note is that now the Soviet Union has a very close idea about the numbers and types of various US military weapons/vehicles. Additionally, the USSR knows the locations of nuclear silos and underground bunkers. They now know the military importance of Alaska, and that could be a reason for why the submarines have been sent there as well.

The world is quite literally on the brink of war as two major superpowers come close to collision. One wrong word, one false move can lead to mass destruction and genocide. It is now up to the delegates to decide whether we will fall into yet another world war or if peace can prevail.

Paperwork

Paperwork in our committee includes:

1. Directives
2. Communiques
3. Press Releases
4. Chits
5. Substantive Chits
6. Draft Resolutions

Expectations

Each and every delegate is expected to participate throughout the conference. In committee, each delegate should aim to ensure that their country (or allotment) ends up in the best possible situation following all the crises.

For research, ensure that you go beyond the background guide. This guide is an introduction to your research and should not serve as all the research you do for committee, remember that even a little extra research can go a long way; however, in a crisis committee it is important to ensure that you do not only focus or remain restricted to your research, but also listen to other delegates and the EB so that you can think on your feet.

A simple tip while researching is to first be completely clear on the agenda, if there is any doubt that you still have after basic research, you can feel free to reach out to the EB. Secondly, you must always ensure that you follow your country's foreign policy. Then, you must begin a deep dive into your research. Always remember that the length of your research document is irrelevant, you must ensure that you know everything that you have researched.

For speeches, remember that our committee prioritises solution-based speeches, simply reiterating the problem this committee faces is not as effective as providing a different and realistic solution that no other delegate could think of.

Lastly, remember to stay calm and positive, oftentimes if you feel like your country is consistently being given crises that harm it, it may also be the EB's way of testing you.

Research Links:

In addition to this background guide, please conduct further research. A few links have been added for your convenience:

1. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb285/>
2. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/> - search for cold war era documents
3. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>
4. <https://www.allworldwars.com/Dropshot%20-%20American%20Plan%20for%20War%20with%20the%20Soviet%20Union%201957.html>
5. Naval War College Review - Operation Dropshot Volume 31
6. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA383639.pdf>
7. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Army> - The name Red Army was abandoned in 1946, but their strength continued

Note: If you have any doubts about ROP, please use this website - <https://www.aravalimun.org/rules-of-procedure>

All the best for the conference and we hope you have a fun and positive experience!