VMUN **2026**

Fictional Crisis Committee

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Vancouver Model United Nations

The Twenty-Fifth Annual Session | January 23rd-25th, 2026

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jessica Wang, and it is my honor to serve as your Director of the Fictional Crisis Committee (FCC) for this year's iteration of Vancouver Model United Nations. Throughout the past few months, your dais team has been working tirelessly to prepare for the conference with the goal of providing you with the best Model United Nations experience possible. Thus, on the behalf of your Chair Sophie Xu and Assistant Director Adele Carson, I would like to sincerely welcome you to FCC.

I first started my Model United Nations journey as a timid 9th grader after being dragged into the intimidating world of hotel conferences by my good friend, Sin Li. Since then, I cannot overstate the profound impact this has had on my life. From the countless friends I gained over the past three years to the numerous nerve-racking interview experiences I had, Model United Nations has helped me grow not just as a delegate, staff, or secretariat member, but also as a person. Through nerve wracking, stammering speeches to chaotic midnight crises, I gained not just skill, but also confidence.

The Space Race continues and it is up to this committee, through debating and dictating, to determine the future of America's next steps. To my delegates, I hope that your experience in the Fictional Crisis Committee will be one that you will be able to look back upon fondly. I encourage you to send in those directives and make full use of your portfolio powers throughout these next three days as we explore the fascinating world of *For All Mankind*!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at fcc@vmun.com. I wish you the best of luck with your preparations!

Best regards,

Jesscia Wang
FCC Director

Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For FCC, position papers, although strongly recommended, are not required. However, delegates who wish to be considered for an award must submit position papers.

Formatting

Position papers should:

— Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee

— Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins

— Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders

— Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research

(not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted **by January 12, 2026, at 23:59 PT**. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as "[last name] [first name] — Position Paper". Please do not add any other attachments to the email. Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award. The email address for this committee is fcc@vmun.com.

The Space Race

Overview

The Space Race, an intense clash for technological and ideological dominance between the global superpowers of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), is in full swing. As a manifestation of the battle between capitalism and communism that encapsulates every aspect of daily life, both countries invest billions into pushing spacefaring technology to its absolute limit, advancing technological development at unprecedented rates.[1] Eastwards in the USSR, the Soviet Space Program experiences unexpected success during its first moon landing; with Sergei Korolev, father of the Soviet Space Program, surviving his critical surgery, the necessary funding to support the Soviet moon program had been secured.[2] This later allowed for the successful manned moon landing by Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov.[3]

Set in an alternative historical scenario of the Cold War and Space Race, in which the Space Race never ended due to the unexpected Soviet success at the first moon landing, this committee revolves around the television show *For All Mankind* aired in 2019 and created by Ronald D. Moore, Matt Wolpert, and Ben Nedivi for Apple TV+.[4]

The survival of Sergei Korolev serves as the Point of Divergence for the series, initiating a butterfly effect that will affect not just the United States or the Soviet Union, but humanity as a whole.[5] In the coming months and years, it is up to this cabinet to determine America's role in shaping the future of the free world and humanity as space exploration continues in earnest. Korolev's survival will undoubtedly lead to further progressions in the Space Race, as the two superpowers fought for victory after victory, bringing spacefaring to new heights.[6]

Timeline

1947 — The Cold War begins. The end of the Second World War and the fall of Nazi Germany leaves the United States and Soviet Union without a common enemy. The post-war peace gives rise to long-standing economic and ideological differences between the two global superpowers, leading to military and political posturing under the threat of a nuclear war.[7]

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[1] Brian Domitrovic, "Was Federal Spending on the Space Race Justified?" Bill of Rights Institute, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://billofrightsinstitute.org/activities/was-federal-spending-on-the-space-race-justified.
[2] Ibid.; "Sergei Korolev," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 3, 2025. https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Sergei_Korolev.
[3] "First Moon Landing," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/First_Moon_landing.
[4] "For All Mankind," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/For_All_Mankind.
[5] "For All Mankind," For All Mankind Wiki.
[6] "Season 2," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Season_2.; "Race to Mars," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Race_to_Mars.
[7] "The Origins of the Cold War," NCpedia, 2009, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/origins-cold-war.

August 2, 1955 — The Space Race begins as the United States and Soviet Union fight to establish technological superiority over each other. This competition becomes a symbol of ideological and political differences.[8]

October 4, 1957 — The Soviet Union launches Sputnik 1, making the USSR the first to successfully launch an artificial satellite into orbit around the Earth.[9] The Soviet victory comes as a surprise to the United States. Injured pride, as the satellite broadcasts radio messages across the United States, causes an increase in investment and development of spacefaring technology.[10]

October 1, 1958 — The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), a civilian space agency to oversee non military space operations for the United States, is created by President Eisenhower, spurred on by the launch of the Soviet Sputnik satellite.[11]

October 7, 1958 — Project Mercury, the United States' first human spaceflight program, begins. Consisting of single-manned missions, it sets the foundation for safe space travel in the future.[12]

May, 1961 — President JFK authorizes 500 Special Forces troops and military advisers to assist the South Vietnamese government. This marks an increase in American assistance in Vietnam and is a trend that only increases.[13]

1961 — The Apollo missions begin, setting the stage for a potential American moon landing. Focusing on establishing American technological and scientific superiority over the Soviet Union, the missions aim to develop and gather the means to land a man on the moon.[14]

April 12, 1961 — Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet cosmonaut, becomes the first man to fly in space after orbiting the Earth once on his Vostok 1 spacecraft.[15] Soviet superiority in the Space Race continues.

September 12, 1962 — President John F. Kennedy pledges to land an American man on the moon by 1970 after the successful launch of Soviet cosmonaut Gagarin into space.[16]

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[8] "Space Race Timeline," Royal Museums Greenwich, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/space-astronomy/space-race-timeline.; "What Was the Space Race?" National Air and Space Museum, August 23, 2023, https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/what-was-space-race.
[9] "Space Race Timeline," Royal Museums Greenwich.; "What Was the Space Race?" National Air and Space Museum.
[10] Steve Garber, "Sputnik and The Dawn of the Space Age," Nasa.gov, Accessed September 10, 2025, https://www.nasa.gov/history/sputnik/index.html.
[11] John Uri, "65 Years Ago: The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 Creates NASA," NASA, August 22, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/history/65-years-ago-the-national-aeronautics-and-space-act-of-1958-creates-nasa/.
[12] "In the Beginning: Project Mercury," NASA, July 25, 2023, https://www.nasa.gov/missions/project-mercury/in-the-beginning-project-mercury/.
[13] "The Cold War," JFK Library, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-cold-war.
[14] "The Apollo Program," NASA, October 31, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/the-apollo-program/.
[15] "Yuri Gagarin and Vostok 1, the First Human Spaceflight," The Planetary Society, Accessed August 3, 2025, https://www.planetary.org/space-missions/vostok-1.
[16] Ibid.

June 16, 1963 — Valentina Tereshkova, a Soviet citizen, becomes the first woman and civilian in space at 26 years old. With her mission lasting two days, 23 hours and 12 minutes, she accrues more flight time than all of the previous American Mercury astronauts combined. Her mission furthers the Soviet dominance in space exploration.[17]

1964 — The Gemini program begins. Consisting of twelve crewed and uncrewed missions over the course of five years, the program's purpose is to test mission equipment and procedure, as well as to train astronauts for the upcoming Apollo missions.[18]

March 18, 1965 — Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov becomes the first person to float in open space and to perform a spacewalk.[19]

January 14, 1966 (Point of Divergence) — Sergei Korolev, father of the Soviet Space Program, survives his surgery, marking the official separation between reality and the timeline of For All Mankind.[20] His influence allows the Soviet Space Program access to sufficient funding to test the N-1 rocket, as well as potential future projects.

January 27, 1967 — The Apollo 1 tragedy occurs, where American astronauts Virgil Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee die due to an accidental cabin fire in the command module. This postpones other crewed launches at NASA by nearly a year, temporarily setting back the American space program.[21]

June 26, 1969 (Initiating Crisis) — Soviet cosmonaut Alezei Leonow becomes the first human to land on the moon, shocking the world with the unexpected Soviet success. This landing is broadcasted live across the world and marks a decisive Soviet victory in the race to the moon. NASA, who previously launched a manned Apollo 10 mission the month before, was heavily criticized for not landing the vehicle on the moon before the Soviets.[22]

Historical Analysis

Formation of the USSR

Communism was first proposed by the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx, who wrote of it in his 1848 *Communist Manifesto*. Under communism, societal resources such as property, means of production,

[17] "First Woman in Space: Valentina," ESA, June 16, 2013, https://www.esa.int/About_Us/50_years_of_ESA/50_years_of_humans_in_space/First_woman_in_space_Valentina.
[18] "Project Gemini," NASA, December 13, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/gemini/.
[19] Anatoly Zak, "Voskhod-2 Achieves the World's First Spacewalk," RussianSpaceWeb.com, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.russianspaceweb.com/voskhod2.html.
[20] "Timeline," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Timeline.
[21] "Apollo 1," NASA, June 17, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/mission/apollo-1/.
[22] "First Moon Landing," For All Mankind Wiki.

education and agriculture were to be owned by the state.[23] The philosophies mentioned in the manifesto, such as the instability of capitalism and the class struggle between the rich and poor, resonated with the working class of Europe. The poor working conditions and low wages present in industrial Europe created the perfect conditions for communism to spread, inciting revolutions by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in urban areas of Europe.[24]

Throughout the early 20th century, the Russian Empire continued to face rising social issues that eventually culminated in its collapse during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Communism, in large part, shaped the population's discontent into meaningful political change.[25] Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was founded and advocated for change under the slogan *"Bread, Land and Peace,"* successfully appealing to the fatigue experienced by citizens due to Russia's involvement in the First World War; following a bloody civil war, the Soviet Union was established under Marxist principles.[26] The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the Soviet Union, was officially formed in 1922 after Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Transcaucasia signed the Declaration and Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[27]

Following Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin rose to power and set about transforming the Soviet Union from an agrarian society to a global superpower driven by authoritarian means. Under his Five-Year-Plans, policies to improve the Soviet economy and revolutionize the large but poor country were implemented.[28] Private property such as farmland were nationalized and combined to form state-run collective farms, in which peasants were forced to cultivate.[29] While originally intended to boost agricultural productivity and increase food yield, logistical oversights and faulty assumptions meant that the collective farms failed, decreased the national food output, and created devastating food shortages that would kill millions of Soviet citizens during the Great Famine of 1932-1933.[30] Furthermore, Stalin also began removing suspected enemies to his authority within both the state and party, resulting in around a million being killed during the Great Purge.[31]

World War II

Leading up to the Second World War, tensions due to the differing political ideologies—capitalism and communism respectively—were present between the United States and the Soviet Union. Additionally, aggressive actions taken by the USSR in the late 1930s such as the occupation of eastern Poland and the invasion of Finland led to further tensions as the United States was pressured to sever ties with the Soviet Union.[32]

[23] "Communism: Karl Marx to Joseph Stalin," CES at UNC, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://europe.unc.edu/iron-curtain/history/communism-karl-marx-to-joseph-stalin/.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] "Soviet Union," History.com, May 27, 2025, https://www.history.com/articles/history-of-the-soviet-union.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] "Communism: Karl Marx to Joseph Stalin," CES at UNC.
[32] "U.S.-Soviet Alliance, 1941–1945," U.S. Department of State, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/us-soviet.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Soviet Union originally signed a Non-Agression Pact with Nazi Germany in 1939. This pact further strained relationships between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, after Hitler broke the pact and invaded the USSR in 1941, the USSR joined the Allied Powers in the fight against the Axis Powers.[33] While tensions and disagreements, particularly about troop deployment and the opening of a western front, still existed between the two countries during the Second World War, the presence of a common enemy allowed the two to cooperate.[34]

Following six long years of conflict across much of the world and tens of millions of deaths, the Allied Powers emerged victorious over the Axis, with American and Soviet involvement being central to this victory. With the absence of Nazi Germany as a common enemy, competing and conflicting ideals arose between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Shaped by the Yalta conference, global spheres of influence were divided up amongst the victors, with Soviets troops in control of Eastern Europe while America the West.[35] The establishment of the Iron Curtain, separating Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe from liberal Western Europe, as well as the division of Germany between Allied victors, served as physical proof of the ideological divide between the two superpowers.

Furthermore, this led to numerous technological breakthroughs in the fields of applied sciences such as nuclear weapons, computer developments, and rocket technologies that would come to shape the policy of Cold War era states.[36]

Cold War

Soon after the end of the Second World War, relationships between the United States and Soviet Union began to sour. The Soviet Union, wary of the American-led Bloc, wanted to expand its borders to create a buffer zone between itself and Western Europe. To do this, it replaced nationalist-leaning governments of many Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Albania, with communist puppet governments under the control of the USSR.[37]

In response to the actions taken by the Soviet Union, the United States increased its involvement in European affairs in order to prevent the spread of communism throughout Western Europe. With legislation such as the Truman Act and Marshall Plan, the United States embarked on an ambitious plan to ameliorate the economic and political state of European nations, many of which were still deeply impacted by the Second World War.[38] To strengthen the co-operation of Western Bloc states, the United States helped create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, an organization formed from fear of communist expansion and of the Soviet

[33] "Communism: Karl Marx to Joseph Stalin," CES at UNC.
[34] "U.S.-Soviet Alliance, 1941–1945," U.S. Department of State.
[35] "The End of WWII and the Division of Europe," CES at UNC, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://europe.unc.edu/the-end-of-wwii-and-the-division-of-europe/.
[36] Mick Ryan, "An Evolving Twentieth-Century Profession: Technology after World War II," *Modern War Institute*, 1 July 2021, mwi.westpoint.edu/an-evolving-twentieth-century-profession-technology-after-world-war-ii/.
[37] "The Cold War," JFK Library.
[38] Ibid.

Union.[39] As a counter, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact with its European allies to protect communist nations from Western threats.

In the following years, the majority of the world would become heavily influenced by the Soviet-American competition. Nascent countries were founded from former colonies, old political systems changed, and both major powers raced to ensure their ideologies took hold in these states.[40] As a result, armed revolutions and conflicts have taken hold across central America, Asia, and Africa over the past few decades. For America, this policy has taken the form of the Truman Doctrine. Instead of former isolationist policies, America would now actively be involved in aiding other—at least in name—democracies politically, economically, and militarily in order to contain Soviet influence from spreading further.[41]

Arms Race and Space Race

Before there was the Space Race, there was the Arms Race, where both the United States and the Soviet Union raced to develop newer and better technology for their respective militaries.[42] With the recent World Wars, technological superiority increasingly became essential for not just warfare, but diplomacy as well. The right to speak on the world stage, to have a fair chance at negotiation, lay in the military backing a country, and both superpowers intended to have the strongest armed forces in the world. In light of recent technological developments, nuclear weapons have played a significant role in the arms race as stockpiles continue to increase annually.

Rocket technologies, additionally, have developed significantly over this period. With the brightest minds in this field concentrated in the United States and USSR, the limits of Earth were overcome as both sides fielded vessels capable of breaking through the atmosphere. In turn, the Space Race between these two powers developed.[43] With both countries pushing forwards new technologies and inventions, it became not just a show of technological superiority, but a facet to represent the political and ideological philosophies of both parties.

Current Situation

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

With Apollo 11 just weeks away from launch, the Soviet Union has achieved what most deemed as impossible––beating the United States on the race to the moon. Alongside the establishment of Soviet superiority in this field on the world stage, the landing serves as tangible proof of the technological and ideological victories of the USSR; NASA, along with the United States, finds itself in a difficult situation. Apollo 10, the final rehearsal before the

[39] Ibid.
[40] Kristen Burton, "Cold Conflict," The National World War II Museum, July 31, 2020, www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/cold-conflict.
[41] "The Truman Doctrine, 1947." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine. Accessed 10 Sept. 2025.
[42] Kristen Burton, "Cold Conflict."
[43] Mick Ryan, "An Evolving Twentieth-Century Profession: Technology after World War II."

planned lunar landing, launched just a month ago, gut-wrenchingly close to the moon; meanwhile, Apollo 11 was scheduled to launch just weeks away from beating the Soviet Union.[44]

The unexpected loss to the USSR changes everything for NASA, deeply undermining its space program and shaking the pride of the entire agency––along with the nation's. Disappointment and pressure comes both internally and externally: citizens, politicians, journalists, technicians and astronauts alike wondering where NASA went wrong, when the United States' lost the Space Race. The agency now faces intense scrutiny, with politicians looking for people to blame and the media looking for the next biggest scoop. Confidence in the agency is at an all time low: NASA is not alone on the chopping block, but it is first in line.

The intense political pressure NASA now faces threatens not just the Apollo missions, but the agency as a whole. Worryingly, the very identity of the agency is being tested as the nation begins to question NASA's leadership and funding. Court hearings, defunding and downscaling are now real threats that face the agency, but there is still an opportunity for NASA to recover. Delegates can look towards taking advantage of the loss, acknowledging it and promising to not just do better, but establish a victory so overwhelming that the Soviet win becomes insignificant next to it. It is imperative for the government and the public to understand that while the battle for the first moon landing may have been lost, it will be NASA––and the United States by extension––who will ultimately win the competition. Members from within the agency are now calling to use the shame and shock from the loss to push for more funding, more support, and more programs.

NASA is not one of the best space programs in the world without good cause. The agency has some of the best talent globally, including unrivaled engineers and astronauts dedicated to one single cause. Additionally, its programs boast incredible infrastructure that prioritizes astronaut safety and contingencies over anything.[45] With the most powerful rocket in the world, Saturn V, NASA's manned space launches have an edge over that of the Soviet Union.[46] While the Soviet Union landed a man on the moon first, the United States can do it too––safer, better, and more reliably.

However, NASA also faces problems that can hinder its progress. As a public agency, political involvement holds the potential to heavily influence the program and change its trajectory as weakened public opinion and governmental trust threatens NASA's funding and future programs.[47] Additionally, the layers of bureaucracy within NASA makes it slower than other agencies, especially with the heavy culture of risk aversion the agency currently faces due to the overcorrection that happened following the Apollo 1 tragedy.[48]

Currently, NASA's priority is to land Apollo 11 and its crew on the moon flawlessly, proving to the world that the United States is just as capable, if not more, than the Soviet Union. They will likely look into investing into technology as well, with greater focus on advancing existing technology as well as creating new ones to widen the technological gap between the United States and Soviet Union. Faster iterations, shorter program turnaround,

[44] "Timeline," For All Mankind Wiki.
[45] "About NASA Infrastructure," National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Accessed 10 Sept. 2025, www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/msd_osi_spacesymposium_onepager_final.pdf?emrc=8b25b5.
[46] "What Was the Saturn V?" NASA, April 1, 2025, https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/for-kids-and-students/what-was-the-saturn-v-grades-5-8/.
[47] "The Politics of Space," *Issues in Science and Technology*, 24 May 2022, issues.org/roland/.
[48] "Apollo 1," NASA, June 17, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/mission/apollo-1/.

and technological diversification will be essential in solidifying NASA's position as the leading space agency in the world. However, it is important that NASA does not stray from its values. Safety, responsibility and accountability has long played an essential role in all its missions, and will stay that way. Astronaut safety cannot be compromised––the agency cannot afford to undermine itself during this critical time. Furthermore, NASA plans to push the Space Race to new extents: lunar bases, longer missions and potentially even Mars programs potential paths for NASA to pursue to make up for the moon loss. Presently, NASA works to create an overwhelming victory that puts an end to the Space Race, establishing an American victory once and for all.

Soviet Space Program

The Soviet Union and the Soviet Space Program has achieved what was previously thought to be impossible: safely landing a man on the moon. With this historical achievement, it has severely undermined the technological and ideological prowess of the United States and NASA, proving to the world that the Soviet Union is just as capable, if not more, than its Cold War rival. National pride is at an all time high, and morale within the agency reflects the current situation as well. However, the Soviet Space Program must now prepare for American retaliation and work harder than ever to maintain its newfound position at the front of the Space Race. Its recent victory is undeniably impressive, but expectations are now upon the program to maintain this quality and lead the Soviet Union to victory in this aspect of the Cold War.

The Soviet Space Program is currently in an incredibly favorable position, with full support from the Kremlin and Politburo due to the huge political win the agency achieved. This means increased investment and funding for the program as the government seeks to further strengthen its position in the Space Race and Cold War by using it as a symbol of Soviet superiority. The Soviet Space Program currently holds the trust of the government and has access to more resources than it had before, however, this also means that there are increased expectations for the agency, meaning future failures hold the potential to land the agency in a worse position than it was in previously.

Through its successful lunar landing, the Soviet Space Program has shown its technological prowess solidifying itself as a leading body in space travel. With its likely increased governmental funding and support, the agency is expected to develop even faster, with more follow up missions to come. The high discipline and centralized decision making allows the agency to operate with higher efficiency than its American counterpart, leading to faster approvals, testing and missions. Lower transparency and safety concerns allows the agency greater freedom to push the boundaries of innovation and to take risks that have the potential to reap great benefits.[49]

While strong, the Soviet Space Program also has several pitfalls that pose risks to the agency. Strong political pressure from the government has the risk of pushing the agency to take unwise shortcuts in order to meet deadlines and deliver results, risking failure and cosmonaut lives. Decreased transparency allows for coverups to provide protection from public scrutiny while leaks hold the potential for drastic decreases in public support and morale should they be revealed.[50] Additionally, the agency is limited in creative freedom when compared to NASA, meaning less potential for breakthroughs that can drastically change the playing field of the Space Race due to the high level of control held by executive members of the agency and government. The Soviet Space

[49] Laurence Tognetti, "A Brief History of Soviet and Russian Human Spaceflight," *Astronomy Magazine*, May 18, 2023, www.astronomy.com/space-exploration/a-brief-history-of-soviet-and-russian-human-spaceflight/.
[50] Richard Fitzgerald, "Russian Space Program," *EBSCO*, 2024, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/politics-and-government/russian-space-program.

Program also lacks the international collaboration NASA enjoys due to the secretive nature of the program.[51] While this may provide the agency an edge in the case of breakthroughs and discoveries, it also holds the agency back in terms of development.

Currently, the Soviet Space Program will prioritize maintaining dominance in the Space Race, taking advantage of its current victory to push for further actions such as establishing a lunar base on the moon or extended space stays and research. As the moon will be used by the Soviet Union as a political and ideological symbol, the program will likely take the opportunity to also establish the benefits of further missions to other planets and national space stations to the government, positioning itself as not just a tool within the Space Race, but an essential part of the Cold War. The Soviet Space Program will take immediate action in planning another lunar mission as soon as possible, with the goal of strengthening Soviet presence on the moon and conducting research on the viability of lunar bases. Additionally, the Soviet Space Program looks to expand its program on various fields and beat the United States at its own game by promoting inclusivity within its crew by increasing the presence and visibility of underrepresented populations, such as women and minorities.

Committee Considerations

The committee currently finds itself in a difficult position with the recent Soviet moon landing, as the entire Apollo program was built around one goal: landing a man on the moon first. Now that the United States has failed that mission, the prestige of the United States and NASA is at risk of falling, being perceived as second to that of the Soviet Union's. Disillusionment and skepticism spread across the country as patriotism and pride are bruised, and morale has taken an all time low as confidence is shaken. Demands for accountability rise within the government as people look for who to blame for the loss, and the threat of hearings or forced resignations looms overhead. Budgets and funding are now weapons, to be used to either push NASA to new levels or to ruin the agency once and for all. Now, it is up to the committee to come to a conclusion and decide on their actions going forward: what will be the nation's goal going forward, and what banner will they rally the nation around from now on?

Additionally, the Soviet victory has created a propaganda nightmare for the government, giving the Soviet Union new fuel to use in their battle against capitalism. Alliances will be threatened if the United States cannot prove its power, and thus the committee must take immediate action to resolve the current situation and reinstate America on the world stage as a technological and ideological leader. Intelligence leaks and failure, conservatism within NASA, and weak leadership must all be investigated and resolved promptly––all while balancing internal priorities and resource allocation.

Currently, the American approach to the Space Race is built off of firsts, a constant race to beat the Soviet Union to the first satellite, the first man in space, and most recently, the first man on the moon. However, with the recent turn of events, it will be necessary for the United States to reframe its mission. An approach purely based on firsts will no longer be sufficient for establishing American superiority, and efforts must be made to shift the focus towards longtime reliability and space exploration, working towards making space travel a part of everyday life, rather than just a part of the Cold War.

[51] Laurence Tognetti, "A Brief History of Soviet and Russian Human Spaceflight."

Initiating Crisis

"Я делаю этот шаг ради своей страны, своего народа и марксистско-ленинского образа жизни, зная, что сегодня - всего лишь один маленький шаг в путешествии, которое приведет всех нас к звездам."

("I take this step for my country, for my people, and for the Marxist-Leninist way of life. Knowing that today is but one small step on a journey that someday will take us all to the stars.")

– Alexei Leonov, Soviet Cosmonaut (Red Moon, For All Mankind).[52]


HOUSTON SENTINEL

HOUSTON'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY

RED MOON

et Cosmonaut Leonov First Man on Lunar Surface

S HIT WITH
R CRISIS

Thousands Run Dry

LIVE BROADCAST TRANSMITTED TO WORLD

Millions Tuned to TV Sets for History Changing Day

Figure 1: A Houston Sentinel article on Leonov's Moon Landing.[53]

The world holds its breath, transfixed at the sight before their eyes. In every corner of the world, the same scene can be seen. People, crowded around televisions, are watching the most important live broadcast in the history of mankind. Emotions are high, no one expected this to happen. On millions of black and white screens worldwide, a grainy video is broadcasted. One man can be seen: Alexei Leonov, Soviet cosmonaut and the first man to step foot on the moon.

Through the crackling of the microphone, the first words on the moon can be heard. "Я делаю этот шаг ради своей страны, своего народа и марксистско-ленинского образа жизни, зная, что сегодня - всего лишь один маленький шаг в путешествии, которое приведет всех нас к звездам."[54] While incomprehensible at first, translators are quick to put up captions for non-Russian speaking watchers. "I take this step for my country, for my people, and for the Marxist-Leninist way of life. Knowing that today is but one small step on a journey that someday will take us all to the stars."[55] Even disregarding the proud Soviet flag visible in the broadcast, the message

[52] "Red Moon," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Red_Moon.
[53] "First Moon Landing," For All Mankind Wiki.
[54] "Alexei Leonov," For All Mankind Wiki, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Alexei_Leonov.
[55] Ibid.

is clear for everyone to see. The Soviet Union has beaten the United States to the moon. The United States has failed.

Even as the groundbreaking moon landing is happening, thoughts are already rising. Why didn't NASA land Apollo 10 on the moon the month before? Why was the CIA unaware that the Soviets were sending a manned mission to the moon? More importantly, what does this mean for the future of NASA and the United States' position in the world?

The United States' authority as the technological and scientific leader of the world has been undermined with the success of the Soviet moon landing, alongside with everything it stands for. Capitalism and democracy have lost in the face of communism and dictatorship. It is now the responsibility of its citizens to restore the United States' position on the world stage. Sending a man to the moon will no longer be enough to end the Space Race. The world needs a resounding victory, something that will demonstrate the unparalleled and unquestionable power of the United States.

Portfolio Overviews

Richard Nixon

The current president of the United States, Nixon has extensive political experience from his various roles leading up to his current position, including past congressional and senatorial positions.[56] As the head of state, Nixon acts as the final decision maker on national policy, with the power to oversee––as well as control––matters such as space programs and foreign policy.[57] While experienced and well-connected, Nixon remains highly conscious of his public image and is thus unwilling to take any action that may damage his reputation, legacy or standing with voters. The current loss to the Soviet Union has heavily damaged his reputation as well as his pride, and his fear of being remembered as the president who "lost the Space Race" may lead him to take drastic actions to ameliorate the situation. Strategic and calculating, Nixon has a tendency to disregard or distrust many of his advisors while relying heavily on those he trusts––namely Haldeman and Kissinger. Nixon's current and most pressing goal is to reestablish the United States' position on the world stage and recover its strength in its own right against the Soviet Union. To achieve this, he will likely push for a rapid response from NASA and attempt to heavily influence public opinion by controlling the narrative. Emphasis on long-term plans, future actions and visibility are on the table as he works to restore national pride and confidence after the country's shocking loss.

Spiro Agnew

Former Governor of Maryland and current Vice President to President Nixon, Agnew makes up for his lack of experience in foreign policy with his loyalty to Nixon.[58] While high-ranking and holding an important governmental position, Agnew currently lacks formal power and occupies a largely ceremonial position. Less diplomatic and highly confrontational, Agnew––while disliked by democrats and intellectuals––has a talent for riling up the public and channeling national pride, making him a possible candidate for holding rallies and

[56] "Richard M. Nixon," National Archives and Records Administration, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/richard-m-nixon/.
[57] "Keeping the Balance: What a President Can Do and Cannot Do," Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/three-branches/what-president-can-do-cannot-do.
[58] "Gov. Spiro Theodore Agnew," National Governors Association, April 16, 2019, https://www.nga.org/governor/spiro-theodore-agnew/.

boosting morale.[59] However, it is likely that he may attempt to defend the current administration and address the lunar loss through rhetoric and political attacks on democrats, which may pose a threat to the integrity of the government. Aiming to increase his political power and standing within his party, the current situation may be the perfect stage for him to take on greater responsibilities and involvement within the space program. Agnew's patriotism will not allow him to tolerate an American loss, thus pushing for increased space spending and for the United States to take a more aggressive position within the Space Race.

William Rogers

An old friend of Nixon and current Secretary of State, Rogers possesses a similar legal background as Nixon, although lacking the diplomatic experience that would greatly benefit him in his role.[60] While loyal and polite, his lacking experience may make it difficult for him to fulfil his duties as the Secretary of State, making him often overshadowed by Kissinger, the National Security Advisor who is deeply trusted by Nixon and much more experienced in diplomacy and international relations.[61] His inexperience means that much of what he says can and often is easily dismissed by Nixon, giving him little tangible power over America's foreign affairs. Presently, Rogers aims to increase his standing within the government and gain influence and respect while maintaining the United States' relationships with its allies. Plans to solidify the nations standing on the international stage while preventing the Soviet Union from using the recent win to their advantage will be Rogers' main goal. Done right, this may successfully gain Nixon's trust and bring him closer to his inner circle. Done wrong, or should he continue with his current passiveness and allow Kissinger to take on this responsibility, he will likely face continued isolation and potential dismissal.

Henry Kissinger

A Harvard professor with a Ph.D in international relations, Kissinger is the mastermind behind Cold War diplomacy, using his expertise in geopolitics and nuclear deterrence to aid the United States in navigating the tumultuous world stage. As the National Security Advisor, he advises Nixon on foreign policy matters, often taking the responsibilities of the Secretary of State Rogers in addition to his own duties with the National Security Council.[62] Calculating, deliberate, and secretive, Kissinger is part of Nixon's inner circle and is highly focused on gaining and consolidating power for himself. His extensive experience in international affairs makes him well-suited for the position of Secretary of State, and much more qualified than the inexperienced Rogers, who he often overshadows. Over the course of this crisis, his priority will include containing communism and limiting Soviet influence, maintaining American superiority on the global stage, and reassuring its allies of its power. Additionally, Kissinger will be highly aware of the potential for the militarization of space and will likely push for increased research and development into the field.

H.R. Haldeman

Longtime friend and aide to Nixon, Haldeman acts as the Chief of Staff to the president, managing the White House staff and ensuring order within its halls.[63] As the Chief of Staff, it is Haldeman's responsibility to hire and

[59] Ibid.
[60] "Biographies of the Secretaries of State: William Pierce Rogers (1913–2001)," U.S. Department of State, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/rogers-william-pierce.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Henry A. Kissinger, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.henryakissinger.com/.
[63] "Harry R. Haldeman (White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files)," Nixon Library, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/finding-aids/harry-r-haldeman-white-house-special-files-staff-member-and-office-files.

train all staff within the White House, as well as ensuring that words spoken within it do not leak outside the walls.[64] Loyal and ever-reliable, Haldeman controls the flow of information within the White House as well as serves as an advisor to Nixon, counseling him on all political affairs. As one of Nixon's oldest friends, Haldeman has the unwavering trust of the president and is part of his inner circle along with Kissinger. His stern and disciplined nature allows him to effortlessly command the White House staff, as well as keep prying eyes away from the president. In addition to his regular duties as Chief of Staff, Haldeman will also have to maintain a careful eye on the current situation, taking any and all action to ensure Nixon's political control and public image are not damaged by America's loss. To respond to the Soviet moon landing, Haldeman will likely attempt to do damage control as soon as possible, pressuring NASA for rapid actions and victories over the USSR to bury America's loss.

David Kennedy

With a strong economic background, Kennedy currently serves as the Secretary of the Treasury, overseeing the United States' economic policy, revenue, and spending.[65] Responsible for the federal budget and funding allocation, Kennedy, while not deeply or directly involved with Cold War politics or the Space Race, holds great power to still influence its trajectory through his decisions. Ultimately, Kennedy is loyal to Nixon and typically tries to stay out of politics, preferring to stay within his own purview. His main concern is the economic status of the United States, focusing on addressing inflation and maintaining economic stability within the nation. Pragmatic and less concerned with the Cold War and Space Race than many of his peers, Kennedy will likely look at the situation more objectively, carefully weighing the costs to benefits of increasing NASA funding. Worries about increasing deficiencies means that he will likely be resistant towards great funding increases, especially as he lacks the political and ideological stake others have within the Space Race. During the course of this crisis, Kennedy will have to balance his loyalty and trust in Nixon to his own personal and professional concerns on the budget, requiring careful consideration and decision making as he shapes the financial future of NASA.

Robert Mayo

As the director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mayo has an illustrious career as an economist, boasting technical and financial expertise that serves the nation well.[66] While he tends to stay out of the public eye, preferring to do his job in peace, his influence can be felt through his actions, drafting federal budgets and allocating funding. In charge of federal spending, his analytical approach to problems and budget-conscious actions makes him a valuable counterbalance to some other members of the committee who tend to disregard the financial portion of their goals. Although trusted by Nixon to do what's best for the nation, Mayo currently has limited influence within the government due to his low profile and minimal politicking. Relatively detached from politics, Mayo's main priority within this committee is to maintain financial realism, wary of unlimited spending in the Space Race. He remains skeptical of increasing NASA's funding in the face of their loss to the Soviet Union, believing that the money can be better spent elsewhere, preferably somewhere with definite results. In a committee and country full of individuals eager for a victory against the Soviet Union, Mayo will be instrumental in controlling the cost of the Space Race.

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[64] Chinatsu Tsuji, "White House Chief of Staff," Encyclopædia Britannica, July 30, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/White-House-Chief-of-Staff.

[65] "David M. Kennedy (1969 - 1971)," U.S. Department of the Treasury, April 23, 2020, https://home.treasury.gov/about/history/prior-secretaries/david-m-kennedy-1969-1971.

[66] "Robert P. Mayo," Federal Reserve History, Accessed September 10, 2025, www.federalreservehistory.org/people/robert-p-mayo.

Melvin Laird

Defence expert and former Wisconsin Congressman, Laird currently serves as the Secretary of Defence. With great knowledge of the military-industrial complex, he manages the Armed Forces, oversees the national defence policy, and controls research and development for the defence program.[67] While pragmatic like Kennedy, Laird possesses the political interest and prowess Kennedy lacks with his strong ties to Congress and the military. With more hawkish policies than some of the other members in the committee, his attention is mainly focused on the Vietnam War as he is occupied with maintaining American military superiority, with less interest in ideological or technological wins. His interest in the Space Race and in NASA primarily lies in the potential of space militarization and he will likely push for greater military involvement within the agency, arguing that it is essential for the United States to obtain the upper hand and achieve a head start over the Soviet Union. Additionally, Laird will likely advocate for greater communication and coordination with the Air Force and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in order to stay updated on the Soviet Union's space program and militarization so America has ample time to react accordingly.

Richard Helms

World War 2 veteran and experienced intelligence officer, Helms currently occupies the position as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and is deeply respected within his agency. Playing a crucial role in keeping America up to date on the Soviet Union's actions, he oversees intelligence collection and operations, as well as manages all CIA agents and missions.[68] While close to Nixon and respected for his discretion and loyalty, the recent failure of the CIA to warn the government of a potential manned moon mission by the Soviet Union has put him, as well as his agency, in a difficult position. Questions on how the CIA failed to warn of a Soviet moon landing ahead of time have arisen as the integrity and competence of the agency is called into question. Thus, Helms' priorities will likely lie in ensuring such a scenario does not occur again by ordering higher Soviet surveillance and a detailed investigation on the events leading up to the Soviet moon landing.

Margaret Smith

The first woman to serve in both the Senate and House of Representatives, Smith is a senior legislator from Maine with a keen interest in space exploration and development.[69] As a senior legislator, she helps set NASA's funding and has a degree of influence on space legislation. Despite being a member of the Republican party, she is respected by both parties and will likely advocate for sustained bipartisan commitment to NASA in order to push American space exploration to new heights. Additionally, she will likely push for greater diversity within NASA, calling for women and minorities to be included in all parts of the agency, from Mission Control to manned missions.

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[67] "Melvin R. Laird," Historical Office, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://history.defense.gov/Multimedia/Biographies/Article-View/Article/571291/melvin-r-laird/.

[68] John Simkin, "Richard Helms," Spartacus Educational, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKhelms.htm.

[69] "Margaret Chase Smith: A Featured Biography," United States Senate, August 9, 2023, https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_SmithMargaret.htm.

Glenn Seaborg

Nobel laureate in chemistry and co-discoverer of plutonium, Seaborg is one of the leading scientists in nuclear energy and currently serves as the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.[70] Presently, he oversees research on nuclear energy and regulation and controls civilian and military atomic programs alike.[71] Innately curious and intellectually driven, he currently works with NASA to develop nuclear propulsion ideas. While not particularly politically driven, a nuclear jet propulsion program led by Seaborg might just be what the United States needs to advance its space program and gain an advantage over the Soviet Union, and might prove to be invaluable to deep space exploration and longer missions.

Thomas Paine

With an illustrated history in the Navy and in engineering, as well as a long list of leadership positions with NASA, Paine currently acts as the Administrator of the agency, heading NASA and responsible for all its operations and correspondence.[72] He sets the direction of the agency, allocating its resources and speaking for NASA during press conferences and interviews. While his history makes him respected in both science and political circles, the recent American loss to the race to the moon has placed him under pressure from Nixon. With his agency and funding at risk, he must take definite action to ensure the success of Apollo 11 and establish NASA as not just a tool in the Cold War, but an essential part of the United States. To do this, he will need to prove its worth, leading the United States to the moon and beyond, securing an overwhelming American victory over the Soviet Union. Bold statements, definite action plans and ambitious goals for the future will be necessary in order to ensure the survival of the Apollo program, as well as the agency.

Eugene Kranz

Aerospace engineer, Air Force veteran, and director of multiple NASA missions including Mercury and Gemini, Kranz serves as the Chief Flight Director at NASA, planning and controlling its numerous missions.[73] During missions, Kranz is responsible for ensuring astronaut safety, postponing or cancelling flights when necessary, while directing operations from Missions Control. As a seasoned military veteran, Kranz's tough and disciplined nature allows him to lead by example, creating an environment where failure is not an option. Able to stay calm under any circumstances, Kranz is deeply respected by astronauts and engineers alike, and will be invaluable for raising morale within the agency after the recent loss. The recent Soviet victory has placed NASA, alongside Kranz, in a difficult position, so it will be his goal to execute the upcoming Apollo 11 missions flawlessly in order to prove the competence of the agency, to the government and to his staff alike.

James Webb

Former Undersecretary of State and Administrator of NASA, Webb has extensive experience in political and scientific fields alike, with connections to both of his former agencies. During his tenure as the Administrator of NASA, Webb oversaw the Gemini and early Apollo missions.[74] While recently retired, his experience and reputation makes him a valuable advisor for the committee due to his ties with Congress and NASA alike.

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[70] "Glenn T. Seaborg," NobelPrize.org, Accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/chemistry/1951/seaborg/biographical/.

[71] "Meet Glenn Seaborg," *Glenn T. Seaborg - His Biography*, Accessed 10 Sept. 2025, www2.lbl.gov/Publications/Seaborg/bio.htm.

[72] "Thomas Paine," For All Mankind Wiki. Accessed August 4, 2025, https://for-all-mankind.fandom.com/wiki/Thomas_Paine.

[73] "Eugene Kranz," National Air and Space Museum, July 22, 2021, https://airandspace.si.edu/explore/stories/eugene-kranz.

[74] "James E. Webb," NASA, February 23, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/people/james-e-webb/.

Although he does not occupy any formal position nor has any official power presently, his expertise in management and administration will prove to be helpful in advancing the United States in the Space Race.

Wernher von Braun

German-born rocket scientist and former member of the Nazi party, von Braun was granted asylum in the United States through Operation Paperclip due to his remarkable engineering and leadership abilities, proven through his involvement in the development of the V-2 rocket.[75] Father of Saturn V, Von Braun is currently the Director of the Marshall Space Flight Center, overseeing its rocket development program. His charisma and accomplishments makes him highly regarded within NASA, but his ties with Nazi Germany in the past still make him a slightly controversial figure. During the course of this crisis, von Braun may well look towards developing the means to enable human exploration and manned missions to Mars, urging the committee to be more ambitious in its pursuits.

Donald Slayton

Former astronaut and part of the original Mercury Seven, Slayton is highly experienced in multiple positions at NASA, having served as pilot, engineer and astronaut alike. He currently serves as the Director of Flight Crew Operations, overseeing astronaut selection, training, and crew formation for NASA missions.[76] His experience in addition to his no-nonsense personality makes him highly-respected within the agency, and he is deeply trusted by his astronauts. Slayton works closely with Kranz in order to maintain the integrity of the agency, constantly working to maintain mission readiness and crew quality during the Space Race. As a respected leader within the agency, Slayton will likely work alongside other NASA leaders to raise morale within the agency and push NASA to greater heights. It will also be a priority for him to protect his astronauts from any political fallout they may face, as well as keep them safe during their missions.

Samuel Phillips

As an Air Force general and experienced engineer, Phillips currently occupies the position of the Director of the Apollo Program at NASA.[77] Responsible for directing the program's development and execution, Phillips is the primary person in charge of the execution of the Apollo missions, coordinating its schedule, engineer contracts, and logistics. Disciplined and efficient, his military history and experience within NASA makes him trusted by both parties, and he maintains close relationships with many of his colleagues, including von Braun and Kranz. With the current situation placing the entire of the Apollo program and crew in a difficult position, and the potential for the cancellation of future programs after Apollo 11, his main priority will be ensuring the success and flawless execution of Apollo 11. In the upcoming weeks, his sole focus will be on Apollo 11, ensuring the mission-readiness and confidence of the crew for their upcoming mission as well as ensuring that there are no problems with any part of the mission. Following this, he will likely work towards ensuring future Apollo missions for lunar exploration and colonization, as well as consider future missions to other planets and beyond.

[75] "Wernher von Braun," NASA, February 6, 2024, https://www.nasa.gov/people/wernher-von-braun/.
[76] "Donald K. 'Deke' Slayton," NASA, June 18, 2024. https://www.nasa.gov/former-astronaut-donald-k-deke-slayton/.
[77] "General Samuel C. Phillips," Air Force, Accessed 10 Sept. 2025, www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/105961/general-samuel-c-phillips/.

Robert Seamans Jr.

Former Deputy Administrator of NASA and the current Secretary of the Air Force, Seaman oversees the Air Force and all its assets. His past with NASA makes him familiar with the agency and an expert on the potential for military applications of the program, having worked with the Department of Defence to coordinate communication between the two agencies and their respective needs.[78] Well connected to both NASA and the Pentagon, Seamans has the capability to act as the coordinator of civilian and military space development, serving as the bridge between the two sectors. With the recent developments in the Soviet Union, Seamans will likely advocate for an increase in research and development for space militarization applications and push for increased cooperation between NASA and the Air Force in order to ensure American superiority, in both space exploration and military prowess.

Ronald Ziegler

With a history in Public Relations and deeply loyal to Nixon, Ziegler is the youngest person to occupy the role of the White House Press Secretary.[79] Although lacking in knowledge of public policy and politics, he is highly competent in managing the White House's communication with the media, allowing him to carefully craft and control the public narrative to whatever benefits Nixon best. Skilled in evading probing and troublesome questions, Ziegler has proven to be greatly effective in protecting Nixon's public image, making him an invaluable asset to the image-conscious president. Additionally, his close ties to members of Nixon's inner circle, such as with Chief of Staff Haldeman, makes him close to Nixon as well.[80] His main goal during this publicity storm is to craft a cohesive narrative and maintain public trust and morale, stating that one loss does not mean the end of NASA's space program, nor the Space Race and that future American victories are yet to come. Emphasizing American values and superiority while disparaging the Soviets will prove to be valuable for channeling patriotism and raising morale; however, it will be essential for Ziegler to remain conscious of public opinion at all times and adjust accordingly based on his observations.

Walter Cronkite

Widely referred to as the "most trusted man in America," Cronkite is highly experienced in the field of journalism, having been a longtime CBS News Anchor. He has a long history and close relationships with NASA, having covered Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions in the past.[81] While unfamiliar with the finer details of the agency, Cronkite plays an essential role in shaping public understanding and opinion of the agency with his influence over American citizens and will be crucial for raising morale and trust within NASA after the Soviet moon landing. Calm and patriotic, his close relationship with von Braun makes him sympathetic towards NASA's current situation despite his lack of personal stake within the agency. As the Soviet moon landing was the most-watched broadcast in history and likely to be remembered for decades, if not centuries, to come, Cronkite will be highly incentivized to cover the story and will likely aim to get exclusive interviews and rights to NASA and government officials in order to become the primary source of information for Space Race related matters.

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[78] "Dr. Robert Channing Seamans Jr.," Air Force. Accessed August 4, 2025. https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/105667/dr-robert-channing-seamans-jr/.

[79] "Ronald L. Ziegler (White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files)," *Ronald L. Ziegler (White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files) | Richard Nixon Museum and Library*, Accessed 10 Sept. 2025, www.nixonlibrary.gov/finding-aids/ronald-l-ziegler-white-house-special-files-staff-member-and-office-files.

[80] John Farrell, "The Most Abused Press Secretary in History," *Politico Magazine*, 2017, www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/03/ron-ziegler-abused-press-secretary-sean-spicer-214922/.

[81] "Walter Cronkite," Encyclopædia Britannica, July 13, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Walter-Cronkite.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your delegate's relationships with other members of the committee and how will that affect any actions they may take?
2. What are your delegate's personal values? How steadfast are their values and ambitions? Are they involved due to deep patriotism and national pride or is their involvement simply due to their position? How will this affect your character during times of crisis?
3. What does your delegate have to gain or lose from the Space Race and by extension, the Cold War? Would it benefit them to extend the conflict, or would they be better benefited by a short and decisive victory?
4. Where do your delegate's priorities lie? Are there other delegates who share those priorities and if so, would your delegate be open to collaboration?
5. What is your delegate's position on the Space Race? Do they believe that the United States should pursue victory at all costs? Do they believe the Space Race is best ended as it is?
6. What does your delegate believe to be most important in the Space Race? What are they willing to sacrifice in order to ensure American victory?
7. What does your delegate believe to be the next course of action? What steps should the United States take going forward? What are their short and long term plans for America in terms of spacefaring?

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