



## **WYOMUN II**

### **Debate Decoded: A Brief Guide to Committee Debate**

The process of conducting debate and collaboratively solving issues in an egalitarian manner can be a messy, difficult business. Fortunately, there exists a well structured system of rules and guidelines, that serves to facilitate and organize this process. Known as parliamentary procedure or “parli pro”, these standards of debate are used very widely in the world of Model UN, and while certain minutiae of parli pro may differ from conference to conference, the bulk of the rules remain generally the same. Those who are proficient in parli pro are known as parliamentarians, and are able to participate to their fullest ability in debate. But what, exactly, will this participation look like? This guide seeks provide such an explanation, describing how the rules of parliamentary procedure meet the real world, and illustrate what committee sessions at WYOMUN will look like.

At WYOMUN II, delegates will participate in one of two styles of committees: crisis committees and blended committees. Both genres are described in further depth below.

#### **Crisis Committees**

Crisis committees begin with exactly what the name describes- a crisis. Delegates will generally represent individuals in some sort of scenario; this situation, however, may be present, historic, futuristic, or even fantasy. Together, they will work to solve the issue at hand while often pursuing personal agendas simultaneously. For example, one of the crisis committees that will be run at WYOMUN II is [Defense of the Motherland](#). In this scenario, delegates will represent ministers and generals of the Soviet Union during World War II and be tasked with repulsing the invasion by Nazi Germany known as Operation Barbarossa.

In a crisis committee, delegates usually have a great deal freedom to act individually, embodied in the use of **directives**. A directive is a note written by a crisis committee delegate that issues instructions or commands for action in the scenario. These dictates must lie within the reasonable bounds of the portfolio powers possessed by the individual or institution a delegate is representing, and constitute the majority of actions taken in this style of committee. Continuing with our previous example, a delegate representing Soviet military leader Georgy Zhukov (Chief of the General Staff) may issue a directive ordering that Red Army troops advance to attack the Nazi forces besieging Leningrad.

The directives sent by delegates should be addressed to the committee's Crisis Director(s), staff members tasked with interpreting delegate directives and conducting the progress of the crisis scenario. When you send a directive to a Crisis Director, they will decide if

it is in order and/or possible, and will accordingly respond to you, affirming your desired actions have been implemented and what the effects are. Similarly, questions about the crisis scenario or about committee in general can be written on notes and addressed to the Crisis Director(s) or Committee Chair.

Beyond personal directives, delegates can collectively draft **committee directives**, major mandates that carry more gravity and thus are more likely to succeed. A committee directive is named or numbered piece of work drafted by one or more delegates that is sent to the chair for introduction. After being introduced, committee directives may be briefly debated or amended before entering voting procedures. If the committee directive is passed with a simple majority, then it will be sent to the Crisis Director where it will be evaluated and implemented into the crisis. Again returning to our Soviet example, General Zhukov may draft a committee directive named "Operation Pluto" with his fellow military cabinet members that describes a scorched earth policy designed to slow the Nazi advance. After a brief moderated caucus where a handful ministers voice their dissent, the committee begins to vote. Out of the 10 delegates present in committee 6 vote in favor and 4 vote in opposition, resulting in the committee directive's passage.

Finally, committee scenarios may evolve through staff issued crisis updates. Developed by Crisis Director(s), crisis updates often take the form of a "newspaper" handout or guest representative describing a major event that has occurred, altering the course of the crisis situation. Delegates in our Defense of the Motherland committee, for example, might see a crisis update in the form of a Russian newspaper describing that Nazi forces have laid siege to the city of Stalingrad, or in the form of a British diplomat coming into committee to discuss the potential for an Anglo-Soviet alliance.

## **Blended Committees**

The second type of committee at WYOMUN II is the blended committee; these committees feature a setting more similar to the traditional debate environment of Model UN conferences, but with crisis committee updates designed to make the situation more dynamic. These committees, like their traditional style inspiration, follow a general process of debating a topic, generating working papers, and writing resolutions to solve the issue. After opening debate and beginning with the speakers list, delegates in these committees will often form into blocs of nations with similar interests. If we examine the example of the [WYOMUN African Union committee](#) on the status of women, we might see a bloc seeking to improve the political and social rights of women led by the representative from the female rights organization Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS). Other blocs in the committee may include one seeking to improve the health of African women, led by the WHO HIV/AIDS director, and one led by conservative African nations seeking to maintain the male-centered status quo, led by a nation like Mali.

Once nations form into blocs with similar ideas, they will begin to write working papers that outline the solution they wish to see implemented. These working papers will eventually evolve into a resolution, and thus share many similarities in structure with its final product. This process of evolution may involve several working paper outlines merging together to form a draft resolution that will be eventually introduced to be debated and voted upon. A draft

resolution doesn't become a proper resolution until it is voted upon and passed by the Committee. For information about how to create working paper that may become a resolution, we recommend reading [this](#) article from Best Delegate, an excellent resource for all things Model UN.

### **Flow of Debate**

In both styles of committee, debate will generally occur through moderated and unmoderated caucuses. You may see more formal paths taken occasionally, such as a speakers lists, but these are generally implemented only at the beginning of debate. In a crisis committee, debate will tend to hop around from one aspect of the scenario to another. If we return to the Defense of the Motherland example we set up earlier, we might see delegates discussing the morale of Soviet citizens during the war, until they receive a crisis update about a devastating German assault on the Ukraine, shifting the focus of debate to this topic. In a blended committee session, debate tends to be slightly more static, as there is a more focused issue at hand. It is likely that the focus of committee debate will shift when situation updates are introduced or when a draft resolution is put on the floor for debate, but in general, it will tend to follow a pattern of debate between blocs on the particulars of the main issue.