SEMMUNA

Southeast Michigan Model United Nations Association

CRISIS COMMITTEE

The Global Race for Critical Resources

Background Guide

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A note to delegates:

Crisis committee is different. You are not drafting policy in the abstract. You are operating inside a system that is already under strain, responding to events you did not anticipate, and making consequential decisions under real pressure. This guide gives you the foundation. What you build on it is up to you.

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I. The Topic: The Global Race for Critical Resources

The technologies that power modern life, from smartphones and laptops to electric vehicles and wind turbines, all depend on a group of materials most people have never thought much about. Lithium. Cobalt. Nickel. Rare earth elements. Copper. These are not exotic curiosities. They are the physical foundation of the modern global economy, and demand for them is accelerating faster than the world's ability to supply them.

Here is the problem. These resources are not evenly distributed. Production is concentrated in a small number of countries. Processing and manufacturing capability is concentrated elsewhere, primarily in China. The result is a deeply interconnected global system in which trade, investment, transportation, and diplomacy are all woven together, and in which a disruption in one part of the network cascades rapidly through the rest.

And right now, that system is under real and growing strain.

Governments are competing aggressively for supply. Corporations are making billion-dollar investment decisions based on supply chains that could shift overnight. Resource-rich nations are asserting more control over their own materials. Developing economies are watching the race accelerate and wondering whether they will be left behind entirely. Environmental and labor abuses continue in the regions where extraction is most concentrated. And the international community has no real framework for managing any of it.

That is the world this committee is set inside. Not a theoretical version of it. The real one.

> **The tension at the heart of this committee:** *Governments seek security. Corporations seek profit. Advocacy groups seek ethical protections. International institutions seek stability. These goals overlap, but they also collide. Your job is to navigate that collision in real time, under pressure, with incomplete information and changing circumstances.*

II. What Are Critical Resources?

Critical resources are raw materials that are both essential to modern industry and at significant risk of supply disruption. They cannot easily be substituted, and losing access to them, even temporarily, can ripple across entire economies.

Resource	Primary Uses	Why It Matters
Lithium	EV batteries; grid-scale energy storage; consumer electronics	The foundation of the clean energy transition. No viable substitute exists at scale.
Cobalt	Battery cathodes; aerospace alloys; industrial applications	Improves battery safety and performance. Approximately 70% of supply comes from the DRC.
Nickel	High-performance batteries; stainless steel; industrial manufacturing	Critical for next-generation EV batteries with greater range and durability.
Rare Earth Elements	Wind turbine magnets; electronics; military and defense systems	Irreplaceable in advanced technologies. Processing is dominated by China.
Copper	Electrical infrastructure; renewable energy systems; industrial machinery	Required for virtually every electrical system. Demand is rising with the energy transition.

What makes these materials geopolitically significant is not just that they are scarce. It is that their production and processing are so concentrated. The DRC holds roughly 70% of global cobalt reserves. China processes the majority of the world's critical minerals, including many that are mined elsewhere before traveling to China for refining. A disruption in a single country or a single processing hub can ripple across the entire global economy with surprising speed.

Real-World Context

The global race for critical resources is not theoretical. It is already reshaping international politics and development trajectories. A few key flashpoints:

The DRC and Cobalt: The DRC produces roughly 70% of the world's cobalt, making it one of the most strategically important countries in the global resource system and one of the most volatile. Documented concerns include unsafe working conditions, child labor, endemic corruption, and political instability. Many governments and corporations simultaneously depend on DRC cobalt and fear the consequences of that dependence.

China and Rare Earth Processing: Even when minerals are mined in Australia, Chile, or the DRC, they frequently travel to China for processing before entering global markets. China has demonstrated its willingness to use this leverage through export controls on gallium, germanium, and other strategic materials. Reducing dependence on Chinese processing capacity is a slow and expensive undertaking that is only now beginning to show results.

Indonesia and Resource Nationalism: Indonesia imposed export restrictions on raw nickel, forcing foreign companies to invest in domestic processing and capturing more value within the Indonesian economy. The approach disrupted global nickel markets but also increased Indonesia's geopolitical influence. Other resource-rich nations are watching closely and drawing their own conclusions.

The Energy Transition: The International Energy Agency has warned that demand for critical minerals could increase several times over in the coming decades as countries expand renewable energy systems and electric vehicle production. That demand is not slowing down. The collision between accelerating demand and a supply system that cannot respond quickly is the structural context within which every development in this committee takes place.

III. The Global Supply Chain

Critical resources do not move from the ground to your device in a straight line. They pass through a complex, multi-stage international supply chain. Understanding that chain matters because every stage is both a source of value and a potential source of vulnerability, and in a crisis, vulnerabilities become leverage.

Stage	What Happens	Key Dependencies	Vulnerability Points
Extraction	Raw materials are mined from the earth in resource-rich regions.	Infrastructure; labor; political stability; foreign investment	Political instability; environmental disasters; labor disputes
Processing and Refining	Raw ore is chemically treated into usable materials. Heavily concentrated in China.	Advanced technology; industrial infrastructure; capital investment	Export controls; geographic concentration; technology gaps
Transportation	Materials move through global shipping networks and trade routes.	Ports; shipping lanes; logistics infrastructure; geopolitical stability	Shipping disruptions; sanctions; trade disputes; piracy
Manufacturing	Processed materials become batteries, electronics, and industrial components.	Advanced manufacturing capacity; technical expertise; supply contracts	Component shortages; demand shocks; intellectual property disputes

> **Key insight:** *No single country or company controls every stage. The system's interdependence is its greatest efficiency and its greatest vulnerability. Small disruptions cascade. In a system already under strain, that cascading effect is happening right now.*

IV. The Global Landscape: Key Actors and Power Dynamics

This committee includes a wide range of actors. Understanding who they are, what they control, and what drives their decisions is essential preparation. You will not get far negotiating with actors you do not understand.

Resource-Producing Countries

Countries with large mineral reserves possess real geopolitical leverage, but that leverage is not unlimited and comes with significant risks. Resource-producing nations face pressure from foreign investors, concerns about internal stability, and difficult choices between short-term revenue and long-term industrial development.

Country	Key Resource	Strategic Position
Democratic Republic of Congo	Cobalt (~70% of global supply)	Enormous leverage; significant political instability; long history of exploitation by foreign actors
Indonesia	Nickel (largest global producer)	Asserting resource nationalism actively; attracting foreign refinery investment as a result
Chile / Bolivia / Argentina	Lithium (the Lithium Triangle)	Collectively control the majority of accessible lithium reserves; potential for producer coordination
Australia	Lithium; rare earth elements	Politically stable; major supplier to the U.S. and allied economies; trusted partner status
China	Rare earth elements; processing capacity across multiple minerals	Dominant processor; uses leverage strategically; framing investments in Africa as South-South cooperation

Industrial and High-Demand Economies

Major industrial economies depend on stable resource access and are investing heavily in diversification, domestic processing, and allied supply networks. Competition among these economies has intensified significantly.

- United States: Pursuing domestic mining and processing expansion; leading allied supply chain initiatives through the Minerals Security Partnership; Inflation Reduction Act incentivizes near-shoring.
- European Union: Highly import-dependent; Critical Raw Materials Act aims to reduce exposure; pursuing partnerships in Africa and Latin America.
- China: Both a major consumer and the world's dominant processor; uses resource leverage as a diplomatic tool.
- Japan and South Korea: Technologically advanced manufacturers with near-total import dependence; pursuing bilateral agreements aggressively.
- India: Growing industrial demand; seeking to build domestic processing capacity; potential swing actor in diplomatic realignments.

Multinational Corporations

Corporate actors operate across borders, often controlling multiple stages of the supply chain simultaneously. They move faster than governments, possess enormous financial resources and technical expertise, and can reshape global markets through investment decisions alone. But they also depend on political stability, regulatory clarity, and public legitimacy, all of which are in shorter supply during a crisis.

International Financial Institutions

Organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, and multilateral development banks do not control resources directly, but they powerfully shape which projects move forward by controlling access to capital. Infrastructure financing, extraction project loans, and development assistance all flow through these institutions, giving them significant indirect influence over the resource system.

Advocacy Organizations and Normative Actors

Advocacy groups influence environmental policy, labor standards, and public opinion. They may lack direct economic power, but their ability to generate media attention, apply reputational pressure, and mobilize public sentiment gives them real leverage, particularly over corporations and governments sensitive to public image. During a crisis, information and perception can be as important as physical supply.

Different Types of Power

Not all influence in this committee comes from military strength or economic size. Understanding what kind of power you hold, and what kind you lack, is essential to building effective strategy.

Type of Power	Who Tends to Hold It	How It Is Used
Control of Natural Resources	Resource-producing countries	Export restrictions; pricing leverage; supply agreements
Financial Influence	Industrialized nations; corporations; financial institutions	Investment decisions; loans; market pressure
Processing and Technology	China; advanced industrial economies	Refining bottlenecks; technology licensing; export controls
Transportation Infrastructure	Countries with key ports and shipping lanes	Logistics control; chokepoint leverage
Market Access	Large consumer economies	Trade agreements; import restrictions; market exclusion
Political Legitimacy	International organizations; democratic governments	Setting norms; multilateral frameworks; diplomatic pressure
Information and Narrative	Media; advocacy groups; well-connected actors	Shaping public perception; reputational pressure; intelligence

> **Strategic reminder:** *Strong delegates identify what power they have, what power they lack, and which partnerships can fill the gap. No actor is self-sufficient in this system, and pretending otherwise is a strategic mistake.*

V. Key Challenges and Tensions

The global critical resource system was not designed with fairness or resilience in mind. It grew from decades of individual decisions made without global coordination. Several serious tensions have emerged as a result, and every one of them will surface in this committee.

1. Rising Demand vs. Limited Supply

Demand for critical resources is accelerating, driven by the energy transition, technological development, and industrial competition. Supply, meanwhile, is geographically concentrated, slow to expand, and dependent on infrastructure and investment that takes years to develop. This mismatch is the structural engine of the current instability, and it will not resolve itself.

2. Resource Nationalism

Governments in resource-rich countries are increasingly asserting control over their resources through export restrictions, domestic processing requirements, contract renegotiations, and higher royalty demands. These policies can support national development and reduce exploitation, but they also disrupt global markets and create uncertainty for investors and importing countries. Indonesia's nickel export ban is the clearest recent example, but it will not be the last.

3. Corporate Influence and Accountability

Corporations often possess more direct control over critical supply chains than any government does. They make investment decisions, control logistics, set prices, and determine which projects proceed. This creates real tension between national sovereignty, market efficiency, and public accountability, particularly in countries where regulatory capacity is limited and exploitation has a long history.

4. Development and Inequality

Resource-rich countries do not automatically benefit from their own resources. When extraction is controlled by foreign corporations, profits flow abroad. When processing happens elsewhere, local communities bear the environmental costs without receiving a proportionate share of the economic rewards. Addressing this inequality is not just a moral imperative. It is a practical requirement for long-term stability.

5. Environmental Sustainability

Mining and industrial processing generate pollution, ecosystem destruction, water contamination, and significant carbon emissions. Yet the world urgently needs more of these materials to build the clean energy systems that will reduce those same emissions. This tension between the environmental cost of extraction and the environmental benefit of the technologies it enables has no easy resolution.

6. Supply Chain Vulnerability

The current supply chain is vulnerable to political instability, infrastructure failures, trade disputes, sanctions, labor unrest, cyberattacks, and shipping disruptions. Any of these can trigger cascading effects that ripple far beyond the original disruption. That is not a theoretical risk. It is the dynamic this committee is set inside.

> **The uncomfortable truth:** *Nearly every proposed solution in this committee involves real trade-offs. Stability may require constraints on sovereignty. Profit may come at the cost of equality. Environmental protection may slow industrial expansion. There are no perfect answers, only better and worse compromises. Your job is to negotiate your way toward the better ones.*

VI. The Current Situation: A System Under Strain

The global system for critical resources has entered a period of acute pressure. This is not a single event. It is a convergence of pressures that has been building for years and has now reached a point where something will give. The question this committee is here to address is what.

Pressure Point	Current Status
Demand	Rising sharply across all major sectors: EV production, renewable energy, consumer electronics, and defense
Supply	Limited and geographically concentrated; expanding slowly relative to demand growth
Processing Capacity	Heavily concentrated in China; diversification efforts by the U.S. and EU are underway but years from maturity
Geopolitical Tensions	Increasing; major powers are competing aggressively for bilateral supply agreements
Environmental Pressure	Intensifying regulatory scrutiny on mining operations in multiple producing countries
Corporate Behavior	Corporations competing aggressively for supply contracts; some pursuing covert strategic positioning
Investor Confidence	Uncertain; markets are pricing in significant risk of further disruption
Developing Nation Access	Deteriorating; smaller economies are increasingly being priced out of key markets

The system remains operational, but the margin for disruption is narrowing rapidly. A single significant event, whether a mine accident, a government collapse, a shipping route closure, a cyberattack on processing infrastructure, or a sudden shift in trade policy, could trigger cascading consequences: market instability, diplomatic conflict, supply shortages, and political escalation.

> **The central question:** *Will the actors in this room find a way to cooperate before the system fractures further, or will the pursuit of individual advantage accelerate the breakdown? That is not a rhetorical question. It is the actual decision this committee faces.*

VII. How This Committee Works: Crisis Mechanics

This is a crisis committee, which means it operates very differently from a standard General Assembly simulation. The situation is not static. New developments will alter the landscape throughout the session. Your strategy at the start of committee will almost certainly need to change before the end of it. That is by design.

Crisis Updates

Throughout the committee, the crisis staff will introduce updates that change the situation in real time. These updates may arrive as news flashes, intelligence reports, market bulletins, or diplomatic communications. Some will create new threats. Some will create new opportunities. Some will do both simultaneously.

When a crisis update arrives, the most important thing you can do is not panic. Read it carefully. Ask yourself three questions: Who benefits from this development? Who is hurt? And how do I position my actor to gain advantage, or limit damage, given what just changed? The delegate who answers those three questions first is usually the one who shapes what happens next.

Crisis Timeline: What to Expect

The crisis in this committee has been building before you even walk in the door. Here is how the timeline is structured:

When	What Happens
Before the conference (a few days out)	You will receive a pre-conference crisis update introducing the initial situation. Read it carefully. This is your first intelligence. Begin thinking about how it affects your actor and what you want to do about it.
When you walk in the door	You will receive a second update reflecting developments that have occurred since the first. The situation has moved. Adjust accordingly.
During the session	The chairs will introduce additional crisis developments throughout the committee. These are not random. They reflect the logical consequences of an unstable system under pressure. How you respond to each one shapes what comes next.

Directives

Directives are the primary action tool in a crisis committee. They are short, specific, action-oriented documents that your delegation submits to the crisis staff to initiate a response to the situation. Think of them as orders, proposals, or strategic moves made on behalf of your actor.

The single most important thing to understand about directives is that specificity is everything. A directive that says 'encourage cooperation on resource access' accomplishes nothing. A directive that says 'authorize the release of 20% of our strategic cobalt reserve to allied manufacturing partners in exchange for a six-month pricing agreement' gives the crisis staff something real to work with and puts your actor in a concrete position in the room.

Weak Directive	Strong Directive
Encourage member states to cooperate on supply issues	Establish a bilateral supply agreement with Chile guaranteeing 40,000 metric tons of lithium per quarter at a fixed price for 24 months
Support environmental protections in mining regions	Announce a trade restriction on cobalt imports from operators who cannot demonstrate compliance with ILO labor standards within 90 days
Work to stabilize global resource markets	Initiate emergency talks with Japan and South Korea to coordinate a joint stockpile release to counter the current price spike
Address corporate accountability concerns	File a formal complaint with the World Bank against [corporation] for violations of project loan environmental conditions in the DRC

Crisis Notes and Private Actions

Not everything in this committee happens publicly. You can send private crisis notes to the crisis staff to initiate actions that other delegations do not know about. Intelligence gathering. Secret negotiations. Investment decisions. Media strategies. Covert positioning. These private channels are a legitimate and important part of crisis committee strategy.

Use them thoughtfully. A well-timed private action can shift the balance of the entire committee. A poorly planned one can blow back in ways that damage your actor's position when it comes to light, and most things do come to light eventually.

> **Remember:** *Public debate establishes your position and signals your values to potential allies. Private action is where the actual deals get made. Effective crisis delegates use both, and they understand the difference.*

Formal Debate

Formal debate still matters in a crisis committee, even though the pace is faster and the stakes feel more immediate. Use formal speeches to signal your actor's position, build coalitions, propose frameworks, and respond to crisis developments in ways that establish your credibility with the room. But do not let formal debate become a substitute for the private negotiation and directive work that actually moves the committee.

VIII. The Backroom: Working with Crisis Staff

This committee will have a Backroom, which is a working space set up outside the main committee room where delegates can interact with crisis staff, send directives, submit private actions, and connect with their Home Country contacts.

What the Backroom Is

This is where the behind-the-scenes machinery of crisis operates. It is staffed by staff who process your directives, track your private actions, and work with the chairs to introduce the developments that keep the simulation moving. Think of the crisis staff as the world outside the committee room: the markets, the governments, the corporations, and the events that your actor is trying to influence.

Your Home Country

In addition to crisis staff, each delegate has access to a Home Country contact. Your Home Country represents the broader institutional resources, intelligence networks, and decision-making authority behind your actor. If you are representing a government, your Home Country is your capital. If you are representing a corporation, it is your board and your operational teams. If you are representing an advocacy organization, it is your network and your member organizations.

Your Home Country contact can provide guidance, help you think through the implications of a crisis update, and give you access to information your actor would realistically have. They are a resource, not a substitute for your own preparation.

How to Use the Backroom Well

> **Important:** *The Backroom is set up at a basic level at this conference. Crisis staff are there to support you, not to run your strategy for you. They can help process a directive, clarify a rule, or confirm the consequences of an action you have already decided to take. They are not there to tell you what to do, write your directives, or make strategic decisions on your behalf.*

We have full confidence that you can walk into this committee prepared enough to operate effectively without depending on crisis staff to guide you. That is exactly the level of preparation we are asking you to bring. Read this guide carefully. Read your actor's profile carefully. Think through your first three moves before you walk in the room. Walk into the Backroom knowing what you want to do, not hoping someone will tell you.

That said, the Backroom is there for a reason. If a crisis update creates a situation you genuinely did not anticipate and you need a moment to think it through with support, that is what the crisis staff is for. If you have a directive that is almost right but you are not sure how to phrase it precisely, ask. If you are uncertain whether a specific action is within the scope of what your actor can realistically do, check. Those are the kinds of questions the Backroom exists to help with.

> **The right mindset:** *Come prepared to work independently. Use the Backroom strategically, not as a crutch. The delegates who get the most out of crisis committee are the ones who arrive with a clear sense of their actor's goals and use crisis staff to sharpen their execution, not to figure out their direction.*

Backroom Best Practices

- Know what you want before you walk in. A directive you have already thought through takes 60 seconds to submit. An improvised one takes 10 minutes and is usually weaker.
- Keep your directives specific. The more concrete your action, the more useful the crisis staff response can be.
- Use private notes strategically. Not every move needs to be public. The actors who think carefully about what to keep private and what to make visible tend to have more leverage.
- Do not monopolize crisis staff time. Other delegates need access too. Come in with focused, specific asks rather than open-ended strategy sessions.
- Debrief with yourself after each Backroom visit. What did you learn? How does it change your next move?

IX. Information, Media, and Public Perception

In a crisis, perception can be as consequential as physical reality. The way events are framed, reported, and understood shapes government decisions, market behavior, corporate strategy, and diplomatic relationships, sometimes as much as the events themselves.

Delegates should actively think about the informational dimension of this committee alongside the material one. The questions are not just 'what should I do?' but 'how will this be understood?' and 'who controls the narrative?'

- How will your actions be perceived by other actors -- and by the public your actor is accountable to?
- Does transparency serve you in this moment, or does strategic ambiguity give you more room to maneuver?
- How can you shape the narrative around your decisions and their consequences?
- What information do you not have that you need -- and how do you get it?
- What information do other actors not have -- and how does that create opportunity or risk for you?

Rumors, misinformation, and reputational pressure are active forces in this committee. The information environment is not neutral. Delegates who understand this and use it strategically will have a real advantage over those who treat information as merely background context.

X. Strategy and Decision-Making

Build Relationships Before You Need Them

The delegates who wait until they are in trouble to seek alliances are already behind. Start forming relationships the moment committee opens. Ask other actors what they need, what they fear, and where they see opportunity. The most durable coalitions are built on genuine understanding of mutual interest, not just tactical convenience.

Think Systemically

In a highly interconnected system, actions have consequences that extend well beyond their immediate targets. Before you act, ask: who else does this affect? What is the second-order consequence? How will other actors respond? Delegates who think only one move ahead are routinely outmaneuvered by those who think three.

Balance Competition and Cooperation

You will almost certainly compete with some actors while cooperating with others -- and the same actor may be both competitor and partner depending on the issue. Temporary alliances are not weakness. They are how effective diplomacy works. The goal is not to defeat other actors. It is to achieve your objectives within a system that requires others to function.

Stay Flexible

The situation will change. Your strategy should account for that from the start. Delegates who arrive with a rigid plan and refuse to adapt when circumstances change are a liability to themselves and their allies. Build in flexibility. Identify your core interests, the things you cannot compromise on, and be willing to negotiate everything else.

Consider Long-Term Consequences

Short-term victories that create long-term instability are not victories. A deal that gives you immediate advantage but fractures your key alliances, destroys your public legitimacy, or triggers retaliatory escalation may cost more than it gains. Strong delegates are always asking: what does this look like six months from now?

> **The bottom line on strategy:** *Understand your role deeply. Build relationships broadly. Adapt constantly. Think about consequences beyond the immediate move. These habits, more than any other, separate effective crisis delegates from ineffective ones.*

XI. Your First 15 Minutes: A Quick-Start Guide

Crisis committees reward delegates who move quickly and confidently from the opening gavel. Here is a concrete framework for your first quarter-hour in the room.

	Action	Why It Matters
1	Clarify your position. What do you control? What do you need? What is your biggest vulnerability based on the pre-conference updates you have already received?	You cannot negotiate effectively without understanding your own starting position. If you walked in without reading the pre-conference updates, you are already behind.
2	Identify key actors. Who are your natural allies? Who are your competitors? Who is a potential swing actor you could bring to your side?	Coalition-building begins with mapping the room, not waiting for others to approach you.
3	Start conversations immediately. Ask what others need, what they fear, and whether they are open to cooperation.	The most important relationships in this committee will be built in the first 15 minutes. Do not wait.
4	Think in terms of deals, not speeches. What can you offer? What do you need in return? What is your first directive going to say?	This committee rewards negotiation, partnership, and specific action. Speeches alone accomplish nothing.
5	Identify your first directive or private action. What is the most important thing you can do right now?	Early action establishes you as an actor to be reckoned with. Passivity in the first 15 minutes invites marginalization for the rest of the session.
6	Stay active. If you are not participating, you are falling behind.	In crisis, the pace does not wait for hesitant delegates. Engage constantly. Something is always happening that you can respond to.

XII. Questions to Consider

Strong delegates come into committee with these questions already worked through. The answers will not be the same for every actor. That is exactly the point.

- What does your actor most need from this committee -- and what are you willing to offer in exchange?
- Who has leverage over your actor right now, and how do you reduce that leverage over the course of the session?
- Which crisis development would be most damaging to your actor's position -- and what is your contingency plan if it happens?
- Where do your interests genuinely overlap with actors you would not normally cooperate with?
- What information do you have that other actors do not -- and how do you use it without giving it away?
- What does your actor look like publicly, and does that image serve your actual strategic interests?
- If you had to write your most important directive right now, before the session even starts, what would it say?
- What does success look like for your actor at the end of this committee -- and is that goal realistic given the current landscape?

XIII. Common Mistakes to Avoid

These are the patterns that consistently weaken delegate performance in crisis committees. Read through them before you walk in.

- Coming in without a clear position. If you do not know what your actor needs and why before the session starts, you will spend the first hour figuring that out while others are already building coalitions and submitting directives.
- Writing vague directives. 'Encourage cooperation' is not a directive. It is a wish. Every directive should answer: who does what, by when, with what specific consequence?
- Relying too heavily on the Backroom. Crisis staff are there to support you, not to run your strategy. Come in prepared. Use the Backroom to sharpen your execution, not to figure out what you are doing.
- Treating every actor as either an ally or an enemy. The most interesting and effective moves in crisis committees happen when actors find unexpected common ground across what seemed like opposing positions.
- Ignoring the informational dimension. What you say publicly shapes how other actors respond to you. What you do privately shapes what you can say publicly. Both matter.
- Thinking linearly in a non-linear system. A decision that looks good right now may have consequences three moves from now that undermine your position entirely. Think ahead.
- Going quiet after a setback. A crisis update that hurts your position is not a reason to go quiet. It is a reason to act. Delegates who disappear when things get difficult lose influence they do not get back.
- Forgetting that the committee extends beyond the room. Your actor exists in a broader world. Other actors have constituents, investors, partner governments, and public reputations. Understanding those external pressures gives you leverage you would not otherwise see.

XIV. Research and Preparation

You are not expected to know everything. You are expected to understand your actor well enough to represent them credibly, think strategically under pressure, and engage with other delegates as a serious negotiating partner. Here is where to focus your preparation.

- Your actor's core interests and priorities: what do they most need, and what are they most afraid of losing?
- Your actor's position within the supply chain: are you a producer, processor, manufacturer, consumer, financial institution, or normative actor?
- Your actor's key relationships: who are your most important partners, who are your most significant competitors, and who do you have leverage over?
- Your actor's vulnerabilities: where are you most exposed to disruption, and who in this room has leverage over you?
- The pre-conference crisis updates you receive: read them carefully and think through the implications before you walk in.
- The real-world geopolitical context: what is actually happening in the global critical resource system, and how does your actor fit into it?

> **Research tip:** *Reading current news about critical minerals, supply chain politics, and the energy transition will give you more useful preparation than any abstract policy document. The world this committee is modeling is the real one.*

XV. Key Terms

Term	Definition
Critical Resources and Minerals	Materials essential to modern industry and technology that are at significant risk of supply disruption and cannot easily be substituted.
Supply Chain	The full network through which resources move, from extraction through processing, manufacturing, and distribution, to reach end users.
Resource Nationalism	Government policies that assert national control over natural resources, including through export restrictions, domestic processing requirements, or contract renegotiations.
Directive	A short, specific, action-oriented document submitted to crisis staff to initiate a response. The primary action tool in a crisis committee.
Crisis Note	A private written communication sent to crisis staff to initiate covert or strategic actions that other delegations do not immediately see.
Backroom	The working space outside the main committee room where delegates interact with crisis staff, submit directives, and connect with Home Country contacts.

Term	Definition
Home Country	The broader institutional authority behind your actor: your capital if you are a government, your board if you are a corporation, your network if you are an advocacy organization.
Diversification	Reducing dependence on a single supplier, producing country, or trade route by developing multiple alternative sources and relationships.
Geopolitical Leverage	Influence gained through control of strategically important resources, locations, or capabilities, used as a tool in diplomatic and economic negotiations.
Interdependence	The condition of mutual reliance between actors in a system, where each depends on others to function, creating both efficiency and shared vulnerability.
Bloc	A group of actors with aligned interests who coordinate their actions, negotiations, and documents to pursue shared goals more effectively.
Volatility	Rapid and unpredictable change in prices, supply levels, or political conditions that makes planning and investment difficult.

XVI. Final Note to Delegates

The global system for critical resources is functional, but increasingly fragile. The decisions made by governments, corporations, financial institutions, and advocacy groups over the next several years will determine whether that system becomes more stable and equitable, or whether it fractures under the weight of competition it was not designed to manage.

In this committee, you represent actors who are making those decisions in real time. Your choices matter, not just for the simulation, but for practicing the kind of systemic, strategic, relationship-centered thinking that real crises actually require.

You do not need to control the room to succeed. You need to understand your role, build the right relationships, adapt when the situation demands it, and respond effectively under pressure. The delegates who thrive in crisis committees are not the ones who are never surprised. They are the ones who know what to do when they are.

Read the pre-conference updates when they arrive. Come in knowing your actor. Know what you want to do before you walk in the room. And then stay ready to change it.

> **One final question to carry into committee:** *What does your actor need, and who in this room can help you get it? Answer that honestly, pursue it strategically, and you will do well.*

Good luck. The situation is live, the stakes are real, and the decisions you make here reflect the kind of thinking the world genuinely needs more of. Make it count.