

Forum: Historically Reformed Security Council

Issue: The Cuban Missile Crisis

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Position: President and Deputy President Introduction

Introduction

The Cuban Missile Crisis is the name given to a 13 day period of heightened tensions between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba (and the USSR). After the Cuban revolution (1953), Cuba became a communist state and aligned itself with the Soviet Union. The satellite state was, however, a part of the US sphere of influence and only 90 miles off the coast of Florida, making the Americans, Kennedy included, fear for the safety of their country. The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion led the new government of Cuba to take up arms in conjunction with the Soviet Union, meaning that a country under influence of their enemies was now armed with 60 missiles and 40,000 men with both the anger and determination to start WWII.

In 1962, negotiations between Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev were finalized. Cuba was armed and dangerous, stocked with enough firepower to combat America. To fully comprehend the geo-politics in place, delegates must understand not only Castro's intentions, but those of Nikita Khrushchev as well. The leader of the Soviet Union had three main reasons for his alliance with the Cubans.

The first, was to do with the 15 missiles the US had placed in Turkey and the 30 missiles placed in Italy, both of which were in direct firing line with Moscow. These missiles were one of the initial trump cards that America was willing to utilize if war was to break-out. They were key in controlling Western European, and could be used as leverage against the USSR.

The second reason refers to the proxy warfare that resulted after World War II. After the war, the USSR did not possess the abilities to control West Berlin. The capitalist part of Germany was instead controlled by the US, France, and Great Britain. The Soviets were weak, WWII left them with diminished resources and Roosevelt's death meant that the only man capable of reasoning with Khrushchev was gone, as such, he decided to place weapons in a location near the US (Cuba) for tactical purposes should he ever need to attack the United States, Cuba was the perfect location from which to do so.

Lastly, the 'missile gap' between the USSR and the US must also be taken into consideration. In 1961, the USSR only had 4 R-7 Semyorka class Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). It would not be until the following year (1962) that the USSR was actually capable of competing with the US, who owned over almost 200 ICBMs and enough high-classed ballistic missile submarines to destroy the Soviets. This information was, however, unknown to both sides during the crisis. At this point the Soviets had over 500 Medium range ballistic missiles (MRBM) capable of mass destruction but only when targets were in close proximity. These missiles were perfect for assaulting capitalist countries near satellite states, but lacked sufficient range or power to target the US. Khrushchev's agreement with the Cuban government allowed him to utilize these intermediate-range missiles in Cuba, a country situated in

America's backyard.

These events placed the two superpowers on high alert with the US on DEFCON 2, the only occasion in history when the country was at its highest level of security, in preparation for nuclear warfare. October 1962 saw the revelation of the USSR's secret mission and the negotiations to prevent another catastrophic war. Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) ensured that both the US and the USSR would perish should another war breakout making the necessity for a solution even more imperative. Delegates should consider this as they negotiate for a solution, one false move could result in devastating consequences across the globe .

Definition of key terms

Détente:

Détente (a French word meaning release from tension) is the name given to a period of improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union

DEFCON 2:

The Defense readiness Condition (DEFCON) is an alert state used by the United States Armed Forces. It prescribes five graduated levels of readiness (or states of alert) for the U.S. military. It increases in severity from DEFCON 5 (least severe) to DEFCON 1 (most severe) to match varying military situations. DEFCON 2 is the step previous to Nuclear war.

HAWKS:

Kennedy's advisors who wanted war and demanded retaliation against the USSR. Opposite to the 'Doves' who wanted peace.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD):

A situation of parity between superpowers where they possess offensive capabilities sufficient to threaten each other's territory with levels of devastation that would be unacceptable to both.

Proxy Warfare:

A war in which two superpowers support opposing third parties as a substitute for fighting each other directly. For example, Angola's Civil War during the 1970s was a prominent proxy war of the Cold War era. The Soviet Union and Cuba backed the Marxist MPLA government, while the United States and South Africa backed the anti communist UNITA rebels

Sphere of Influence:

A region over which a powerful nation exerts unofficial but significant political, military, and economic domination. Eastern Europe during the Cold War was a Soviet sphere of influence.

Fascism:

A political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.

NATO:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance and a system of collective defence, signed on 4 April 1949 that consists of 29 independent member countries across North America and Europe.

Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact:

A pact signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939 by foreign ministers Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov. The pact delineated the spheres of interest between the two powers: Nazi Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Potsdam Agreement:

An agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. It also concerned the occupation and reconstruction of Germany and its borders, according to international law; it was not a peace treaty.

Satellite state:

A nation that was formally independent, but in fact dominated by and subservient to the Soviet Union. After World War II, many of the nations of Eastern Europe became Soviet satellites.

Overview

1953 saw the communist takeover of Cuba, the revolution lasted 6 years, led by Fidel Castro. Castro felt that the US was Cuba's enemy, not only had they banned all imports of Cuban sugar around the world, thus bankrupting the Cuban economy but the CIA had also attempted to assassinate Castro many times during his rise to power. As such, Castro wanted to gain independence from the US by aligning himself with the Soviet Union.

The revolution meant that Cuba was now communistic and its connections with the Soviet Union led to the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US. American President Eisenhower approved a secret plan, "A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime", (JMARC), to overthrow the Castro regime. This became known as the Bay of Pigs invasion. The CIA trained Cuban exiles to invade Cuba and overthrow the Cuban government (who were thought to be unpopular by the Americans) from the inside. However, Castro's new regime was extremely popular and the CIA was stopped by Castro's army, by which time John F. Kennedy had assumed the presidency in the US. Castro, feeling vulnerable after the invasion asked the Soviets for help who, in turn, offered economic aid to Cuba to help them industrialise as well as secretly arming them with medium and intermediate range ballistic missiles capable of mass destruction across the US. The Bay of Pigs invasion failed miserably, increasing tensions between Cuba and the US, and ultimately between the USSR and the US.

In October 1962, rising tensions erupted as the US discovered the missiles the Soviets have placed in Cuba and Kennedy, who was under pressure from the 'Hawks', is forced to retaliate by imposing a naval blockade around Cuba and demanded that Khrushchev remove his missiles from Cuba. Khrushchev claims the Soviets will break the blockade and both countries are prepared for nuclear war. Then, on the 27th of October, a US spy plane (posing as a weather plane) is shot down over Cuba and as

the US moves to DEFCON 2, if the two superpowers do not reach an agreement, the entire world would reap the consequences
Timeline of key events

Monday, October 15

A U-2 reconnaissance aircraft reveals several SS-4 nuclear missiles in Cuba.

Tuesday, October 16

Crisis begins: President Kennedy convenes his Executive Committee to consider America's options.

Wednesday, October 17

An SS-5 IRBM site, the first of three to be identified, is detected in Cuba.

Thursday, October 18

President Kennedy meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrie Gromyko and advises him that America will not tolerate Soviet missiles in Cuba. Gromyko denies the presence of any Soviet weaponry in Cuba.

CHAMA Dominic Airdrop test over Johnston Island area. 1.59 Megaton yield Hydrogen bomb test.

Friday, October 19

President Kennedy meets with the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, and the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They discuss military options.

Saturday, October 20

President Kennedy returns to Washington to discuss the discovery of additional Soviet missiles in Cuba.

CHECKMATE Dominic High Altitude test on Missile test over Johnston Island Area. Low Kiloton yield.

Sunday, October 21

President Kennedy decides on a naval blockade of Cuba.

Monday, October 22

President Kennedy addresses the American public and announces his plan to implement a naval blockade of Cuba. U.S. military alert is set at DEFCON 3 and Castro mobilizes all of Cuba's military forces.

High Altitude Russian Nuclear Test at Kapustin Yar Hydrogen Bomb on Rocket. Yield Approx. 300 Kilotons

Tuesday, October 23

The OAS (Organization of American States) supports the decision to quarantine Cuba.

Reconnaissance photos reveal that Soviet missiles are ready for launch.

McNamara, Kennedy review and discuss options of confrontation.

Discussion of diplomatic efforts at the UN and the vote by the Organization of American States.

Wednesday, October 24

Soviet ships reach the quarantine line, but receive radio orders from Moscow to hold their positions.

Consideration of civil defense options and planning for possible Soviet responses in Berlin.

President Kennedy concludes that if we invade in the next ten days, the missile base crews in Cuba will likely fire at least some of the missiles at US targets.

Detailed briefing on new reconnaissance photos from Cuba and discussion of the need to disperse planes at Florida bases in the event of attacks by MIGs based in Cuba.

McNamara talks of a very dangerous situation since ships approaching the quarantine line are being shadowed by a Soviet submarine.

Thursday, October 25

U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson confronts the Soviets at the U.N. but they refuse to answer. American military forces are instructed to set DEFCON 2 - the highest ever in U.S. history.

Review of the movement of ships toward the quarantine line and potential US responses.

Friday, October 26

EX-COMM receives a letter from Khrushchev stating that the Soviets would remove their missiles if President Kennedy publicly guarantees the U.S. will not invade Cuba.

The CIA reports that the construction of the missile sites is continuing and accelerating. RFK meets secretly with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and agrees after a phone call to the president that the removal of US missiles from Turkey is negotiable as part of a comprehensive settlement.

Khrushchev receives a cable from Castro urging a nuclear first strike against the US in the event of an invasion of Cuba.

BLUEGILL TRIPLE PRIME Dominic test High altitude on Thor IRBM over Johnston Island area. Low Kiloton yield

Saturday, October 27

While one U-2 spy plane accidentally flies into Russia, another is shot down over Cuba. EX-COMM receives a second letter from Khrushchev stating that, in addition to a public promise not to invade Cuba, the U.S. remove its missiles from Turkey.

CALAMITY Dominic Airdrop over Johnston Island area by B-52 Hydrogen bomb test. Yield 800 Kilotons.

Sunday, October 28

The crisis is over. In a speech aired on Radio Moscow, Khrushchev announces the dismantling of Soviet missiles in Cuba and does not insist on his demands concerning the removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey.

High Altitude Russian Nuclear Test conducted at Kapustin Yar. Hydrogen Bomb on Rocket. Yield approx. 300 Kilotons.

Monday, October 29

President Kennedy orders US ships to remain on the quarantine line and authorizes continuation of low-level reconnaissance flights.

Wednesday, November 21

Just over a month after the crisis began, President Kennedy terminates the quarantine when Khrushchev agrees after several weeks of tense negotiations at the UN to withdraw Soviet IL-28 nuclear bombers from Cuba.

Majorly involved parties

The United States

John F. Kennedy ran for the presidency on a pledge that a “new generation” would resist communist aggression and maintain American nuclear superiority. Only a month before the missile crisis began, the president assured Congress and the nation that the Soviets had no plans to build a military base in Cuba—but if they did, he would “do whatever must be done” to protect American security and drive them out.

When missiles were discovered in Cuba, during an important mid-term election campaign, it came as a shock. Kennedy had been assured by the CIA and by private communications with Khrushchev that this would never happen.

The president faced a political and strategic dilemma: If he failed to get the Soviet missiles out of Cuba, his Republican opponents would have a field day (he even told his brother Bobby that he would be impeached). On the other hand, if he confronted the Soviets and miscalculated, he could plunge the nation into nuclear war. The stakes had never been higher—he and Khrushchev were “one mistake away” from triggering a holocaust.

New historical evidence suggests Kennedy handled the crisis with aplomb, navigating a viable course between the truculence of his ExComm hawks and the conciliatory logic of the doves. During the tense discussions, Kennedy listened carefully, asked probing questions, and demonstrated that he was in charge.

The Soviet Union

In 1959, Nikita Khrushchev became the first Soviet leader to visit the United States and the first to begin rolling back the totalitarian excesses of Stalinism. To Americans, he seemed a crude, bombastic bear, a man who might be capable of anything (of course, most Soviets felt the same way about the American president).

For Khrushchev, Cuba was the harbinger of socialism in the Americas and an opportunity for Soviet influence to escape the containment strategy of the Western allies. He courted Fidel Castro by

giving the Cubans everything the Americans denied them: oil, cash, and weapons.

Encircled by superior U.S. nuclear forces, some of them stationed less than 200 miles from his own Black Sea dacha, Khrushchev decided to secretly place the Cuban revolution under the Soviet nuclear umbrella by basing short- and medium-range missiles in Cuba. Above all, Khrushchev wanted to be treated as an equal in the contest with Washington, and the Cuban missiles were designed to bring him one step closer to nuclear parity.

One year after the Americans discovered those missiles, however, the Soviet premier was removed from office, in part because he had failed to protect the interests of Communist Party hard-liners.

Cuba

In the wake of the April 1961 U.S.-backed invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs, Fidel Castro and other Cuban officials believed a new, more organized American invasion was imminent. The Soviet offer of nuclear missiles was quickly accepted.

The fact that a nuclear confrontation might lead to the complete destruction of the island and its people was a risk the revolutionaries appeared willing to take. It was preferable to giving in to U.S. attempts to put an end to the revolution.

But by the end of the crisis, Castro became infuriated with Khrushchev's unilateral decision to remove the missiles and bombers he'd delivered only months before. "The Soviets have treated Cuba as a bargaining chip," he said.

Castro didn't believe Kennedy's vague promise to leave Cuba alone. Relations between Havana and Moscow remained strained for several years.

Previous attempts to resolve conflict

The Crisis ended on the 28th of October 1962, Kennedy had to consider a variety of options in order to negotiate with Khrushchev. He could initiate air strikes on the Cuban Missile bases or invade the country; however, both of these options would lead to WWII. He could talk to the Soviets however this was unlikely to work and would make the Americans look weak in comparison to the USSR. Instead Kennedy decided to impose a naval blockade around Cuba to stop any more missiles entering the country, this was a temporary fix and only bought the US a few more days to find a more permanent solution. Kennedy publicly declares the blockade and demands that the soviet missiles are removed from Cuba , Khrushchev counters with a threat to destroy the blockade and announces that the USSR will fire nuclear weapons if war breaks out. On the 25th of October, the US moves to DEFCON 2 and Kennedy asked Khrushchev once again to withdraw the missiles. The Soviets agree provided the US promises not to invade Cuba and to remove the American missiles in Italy and Turkey.

Then, the Cuban Missile Crisis reaches its height (27.10.62), this is the closest to war the world has been since the start of the Cold War, as a US spy plane is shot down over Cuba, the Hawks demand

retaliation and JFK sends his brother, Robert Kennedy, to negotiate a deal with the Soviet diplomat. Robert Kennedy accepts Khrushchev's proposal as long as the removal of the American missiles takes place in secret, Khrushchev agrees thus ending one of the most dangerous situations of the 20th century. In order to prevent any such crises from reoccurring the following plans were put in place:

- Hotline

- A direct communication line between the US and USSR was set and is still tested every day.

- Limited Test Ban Treaty (August 1963) ○ Both the US and the USSR agreed to ban the testing of all nuclear weapons in space, sea and above ground, and by 1965 the two countries were equal in the Arms race.

- Introduction of the policy of Detente

- The crisis highlighted the fragile relations between the US and the USSR, JFK emphasised the need for both countries to focus on their common interests, MAD ensured that should war breakout, both countries would be destroyed which meant greater stability between the two superpowers and these factors lead to the relaxing of tensions between the two countries Possible solutions

Solution

Although the solution reached is both optimal and arguably the only solution that could have been reached within the allotted time frame and worldwide attention. From our perspective there is no other way that this crisis could have ended without serious loss on both sides.

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