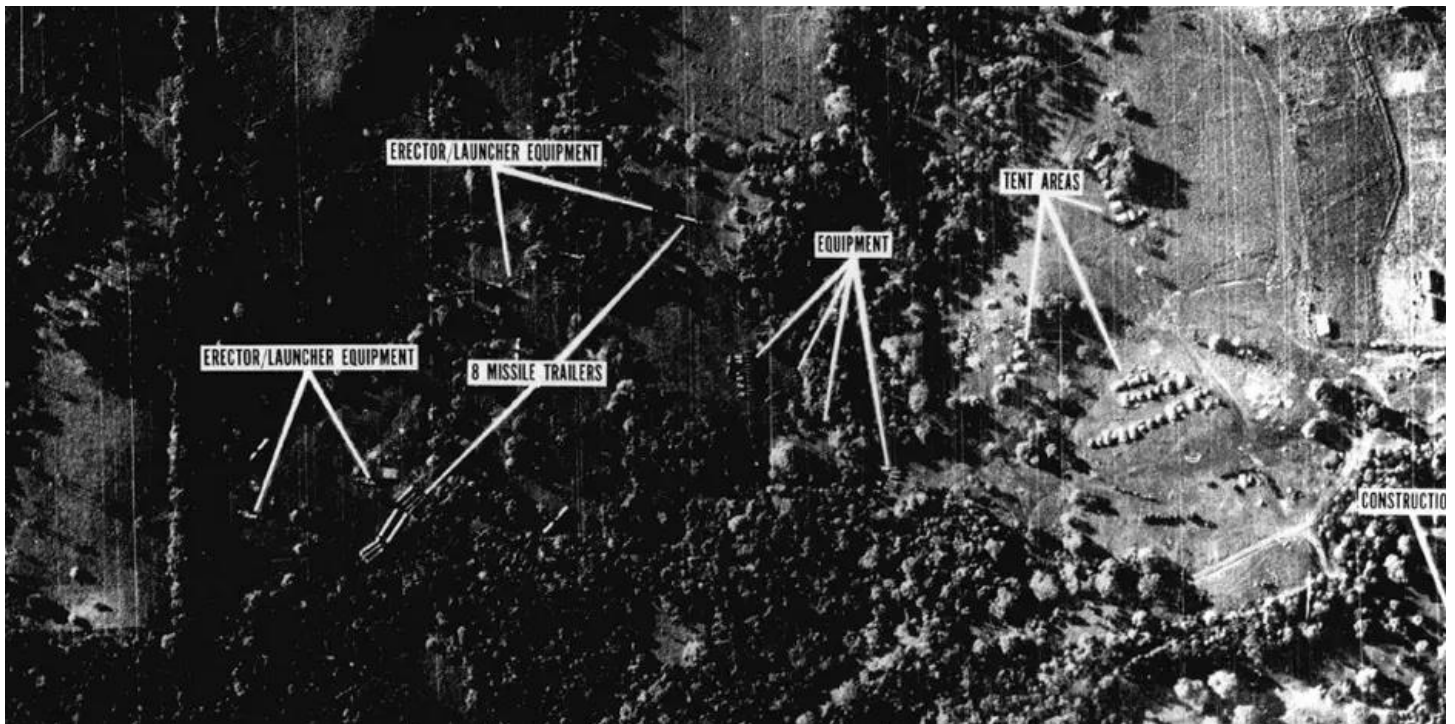


CSI: WHAT LED TO THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS?

Location: Havana, Cuba
Washington, DC, United States
Moscow, Russia (Soviet Union)

Leaders: Fidel Castro (Cuba) John F. Kennedy (USA)
Nikita Khrushchev (Soviet Union) Date: October 16 - October 28, 1962

Death Toll: 1 (a US Air Force Pilot shot down on October 27)



Above is an aerial photo taken by a United States U-2 jet on an information-gathering mission. The image clearly shows Soviet missiles being readied in Cuba.

CASE SUMMARY

The Cuban Missile Crisis brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of an all-out nuclear war that could have ended the world as we know it. In fact, this crisis is the closest the world has ever come to this unthinkable catastrophe. In February 1944, leaders from the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union gathered at the Yalta Conference to arrange for the conclusion of World War II. With Nazi Germany defeated, and peace temporarily restored, the United States and the Soviet Union almost instantly vied for world dominance; this was the beginning of the Cold War.

The Cold War was a war over ideologies - the United States promoting business-friendly capitalism and the Soviet Union promoting worker-led communism. No direct war was ever fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, but proxy wars (a conflict between two nations in which neither country directly engages the other) dotted the next two decades with both countries hoping to extend their ideology around the globe. It was this environment in which the Cuban Missile Crisis was born. In this investigation, you will navigate through the events of the late-1950s and early-1960s to understand just how close the world came to nuclear war. In the end, you will understand the question . . . WHAT EVENTS LED TO THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS AND WHO IS TO BLAME?

Directions: As you read through the **Cuban Missile Crisis Dates PDF**, document what major events occurred on the dates in the chart below. Use bullet points and be sure to capture the main idea.

October 28, 1958

- The United States seeks a way to stabilize the region and keep the Soviet Union in check.
- The United States entered into an agreement with Turkey, a member of NATO, to bring fifteen nuclear- tipped Jupiter missiles into the eastern European country beginning on June 1, 1961.

February 4 - 13, 1960

- Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev sends his first deputy, Anastas Mikoyan, to Cuba in order to discuss a potential economic and trade agreement.
- No discussion of military involvement is discussed between Mikoyan and Castro.
- The hope is to make Cuba less reliant on the United States for economic aid.

May 7, 1960

- The Soviet Union and Cuba officially establish diplomatic relations.
- The Cubans ask for oil imports from the Soviets to propel their economy, the Soviets willingly accept.

July 5, 1960

- Fidel Castro orders the seizure of all U.S. companies and properties.
- United States businesses that operate plants in Cuba are outraged and call on the American government to act.
- Over \$1.7 billion in assets are seized by Castro's communist regime.

September 1960

- The first weapons shipment from the Soviet Union arrives in Cuba without U.S. knowledge of the transaction.
- It is also believed that Soviet weapon experts have arrived in Cuba to help deter

- Construction on several anti-aircraft batteries begins to target U.S. planes from possible aerial attacks.
- Soviet advisors also begin delivering progress reports to Castro as updates are made to military equipment.
- This all takes place in secret and without knowledge of the United States.

October 19, 1960

- All United States citizens and companies are banned from exporting any goods to Cuba, except for food and medicine.

April 16, 1961

- A CIA-backed plan to overthrow the Castro regime is launched. Known as the “Bay of Pigs” invasion.
- The CIA planned to train and provide firearms to Cuban exiles, who would enter Cuba through the Bay of Pigs and eventually make their way to Havana to assassinate Castro.
- The plan ultimately fails as airstrikes miss their targets and Castro is alerted about the invasion from Soviet intelligence.

November 30, 1961

- On November 31, the Kennedy administration launched Operation Mongoose to do what the prior invasion failed to do: assassinate Fidel Castro.
- Like the Bay of Pigs, Operation Mongoose fails as Castro is never assassinated.

September 8-15, 1962

- First on September 8, and then again on September 15, Soviet cargo ships arrive in Cuba carrying nuclear missiles and mid-range ballistic missiles.
- The State Department confirms there are Soviet surface-to-air missiles (SAM) in Cuba, but these missiles do not pose a threat to the United States.
- United States aircrafts increase surveillance of the SAM and alternate sites, and Operation Mongoose is intensified.

October 15, 1962

- The day before, on October 14, a U.S. aircraft was deployed to take several photographs of Cuba.
- Evidence shows the construction of twenty-four surface-to-air missiles, twenty-eight bombers to carry out air attacks, and several sites to be used for mid-range ballistic missiles.
- These missiles are determined to be of Soviet origin and have the capability of reaching the United States. mid-range ballistic missiles.
- President Kennedy's administration determines the ballistic missile sites will be fully operational in two weeks.

October 22, 1962

- At 7pm EST, Kennedy addresses the United States public via a nationwide emergency broadcast.
- Kennedy's plan is simple: a strict quarantine has already been established around Cuba to stop any and all cargo shipments heading toward Cuba.
- Any ship containing weapons will be turned back. Any ship that breaches the quarantine line will be neutralized.
- The United States military is placed on high alert.

October 25, 1962

- Publicly the Soviets call the blockade an "act of aggression" and claim their ships will not be intimidated.
- The world waits in fear as fourteen Soviet ships approach the blockade.
- Kennedy dispatches twenty-three nuclear-armed B-52 bombers prepared to strike the Soviet Union if the quarantine line is breached.
- At 5pm EST, the fourteen Soviet ships reach the blockade and stop.
- The ships turn back.

October 27, 1962

- At 11:03am EST, the State Department receives a letter from Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev that offers a solution.

- “...We are willing to remove from Cuba the means which you regard as offensive... Your representatives will make a declaration to the effect that ... the United States will remove its analogous from Turkey and after that people entrusted by the United Nations Security Council could inspect on the spot the fulfillment of the pledges made.”
- Debate continues throughout the entire day over Khrushchev’s proposal.

November 2, 1962

- President Kennedy addresses the news media on November 2 regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis: the crisis is over.
- The United States publicly agrees to never invade Cuba, while the
- Soviets agree to remove the missiles from the island.
- The United States also secretly agrees to remove the missiles from Turkey and Italy.
- The quarantine is kept in effect until all weapons are removed from Cuba, and the United States keeps surveillance of the island to verify the
- work is being done.
- On November 20 at 6:45pm, the blockade is lifted.

Directions: Use your understanding of the crisis, the events that you have analyzed, and your judgement to answer the overarching questions below.

1.) Who was ultimately responsible for the Cuban Missile Crisis? Why do you think so?

The Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev for sending his first deputy to capitalize Cuba’s resentment toward the U.S., or President Eisenhower for refusing to talk with the Prime Minister because of his radical policies. I think this because if the Soviets didn’t capitalize the resentment, there may have not been so much tension, or if the US president talked to the Cuban Prime Minister, maybe they could have found a way to be peaceful with one another.

2.) Think about how the crisis came to an end. Who do you think “won?” Explain.

I think both won and lost. On one hand the US must remove their missiles from Italy and Turkey, and to never invade Cuba. On the other hand, the Soviets promised to remove their missiles from Cuba.

3.) Today, most historians believe that the result of the crisis severely weakened Khrushchev's power in the Soviet Union and ultimately led to his removal just two years later. Why do you think the outcome of the crisis was viewed as a failure for Khrushchev?

I think that it was viewed as a failure because he was the one who first wrote the letter saying that the USSR would remove all missiles from Cuba if the US removed their missiles from Italy, Turkey, and promised to never invade Cuba.

4.) Why do you think the United States “secretly” removed missiles from Turkey and Italy, yet publicly declared to never invade Cuba? Why not make the missile deal public?

Other countries may perceive the US as weak without missiles in other countries, so those countries may try to damage the US in some way.

5.) Many within President Kennedy’s inner circle did not agree with his decision to strike a deal with Khrushchev, instead wanting to invade Cuba to rid the island of both the missiles and the Communists. What did this decision say about his leadership as president?

He was not willing to sacrifice the lives of every person in his country only to seem very powerful and for other selfish reasons, instead President Kennedy agreed, and saved his country from possible danger because it probably would have caused the Soviets to release those missiles and kill many, many people.