

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Key Questions

What were the causes of the Cuban missile crisis? How close did the world come to nuclear war?
How was the confrontation resolved?

Content recap

The roots of confrontation

The small Caribbean island of Cuba, which lies 145 kilometres south of the United States mainland, was a prime example of American **overlordship** in Latin America. In 1898 the Americans freed Cuba from her Spanish rulers and for the next sixty years it was normally independent but under strong American influence. Cuba's livelihood depended on the sale of its sugar harvest to America.

In 1959 a band of revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro ousted the American backed but corrupt dictatorship of Colonel Fulgencia Batista. Cuba had been a haven for American gamblers and tourists, while the Cuban people languished in poverty. The people welcomed Castro as their liberator. Immediately he implemented reform. He applied to the United States for loans, but his request was refused. Castro responded by nationalizing all American commercial interests. In July 1960 the USSR agreed to purchase Cuban sugar. Although Castro claimed that the island was not **aligned** with the USSR, the CIA was greatly alarmed to have a communist stronghold so close to its back door. On April 17 1961 the United States aided a disastrous attempt by anti-Castro Cuban **emigres** to overthrow the communist regime. They landed in the Bay of Pigs, but were crushed by Castro's forces. Kennedy was humiliated by this buff and Cuba strengthened her ties with the communist bloc.

The discovery of missiles on Cuba

In July 1962 Soviet weapons and military units began arriving in Cuba. In October, photographs taken by U2 surveillance aircraft revealed surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites were being constructed. Intelligence reports confirmed that Soviet vessels, carrying more rockets with nuclear warheads, were heading for Cuba. The most serious crisis of the Cold War began. It brought the USSR and the United States to the brink of nuclear war and threatened all humanity. What would Kennedy do, faced with such a threat?

On October 22 Kennedy announced his decision:

This urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base by the presence of these large long-range and clearly **offensive weapons** of sudden mass destruction constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas... I have directed that the following initial steps be taken. First, a strict 'quarantine' on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba. All ships found to contain cargo of offensive weapons will be turned back. Secondly, I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup... I have directed the allied forces to prepare for any eventualities ... 'Thirdly, it shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the western hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union... Finally I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless and provocative threat to world peace.

In a statement issued on October 23, Khrushchev declared that 'the Soviet Union was taking all necessary measures to prevent it from being caught unawares and to enable it to offer a fitting reply to the aggressor.

America stands firm

The blockade began on October 24. How would Russia react to America's quarantine'? How much force was America willing to exert in order to stop Russian access? Was America bluffing? The situation grew more perilous. If the American warships fired on a Russian vessel this could detonate a war of unimaginable horror. On October 26 Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev. In it Khrushchev expressed his wish to avoid a nuclear holocaust. He promised to dismantle the missile bases and return all arsenal to the Soviet Union if America gave assurances against an invasion on Cuba and terminated the naval blockade. This correspondence offered the first hope of a peaceful solution. The following day Kennedy received another letter from Khrushchev. This time the Russian premier was trying to strike a bargain. He vowed to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba if the United States, a leading member of NATO, would recall her missiles from Turkey. Kennedy would not accept this trade-off. A new dilemma faced him. Would Russia attack Turkey if the United States invaded Cuba?

Kennedy accepted Khrushchev first offer and ignored the second. He delivered an ultimatum to the Soviets for a swift response, otherwise American troops would be deployed in Cuba. The world held its breath. Khrushchev's reply came on October 28. We agree to remove those weapons from Cuba. The Cuban missile crisis was over and the immediate risk of nuclear war was averted.

Results of the crisis

To this day the real motives for Russia's provocative action are not known. Why had Khrushchev decided to install missile launching sites on Cuba, when their discovery was bound to evoke condemnation from the West? Was he trying to force concessions over Berlin by violating America's sphere of influence? Or was he genuinely embarking on some overt imperialist adventure? The Cuban missile crisis was a sobering experience for the two leaders. It marked the beginning of a new relaxed diplomatic relationship between the two superpowers.

Key Terms

OVERLORDSHIP: exerting influence over a country to the point of complete control.

NATIONALISE: to make privately owned land and industry the property of the states

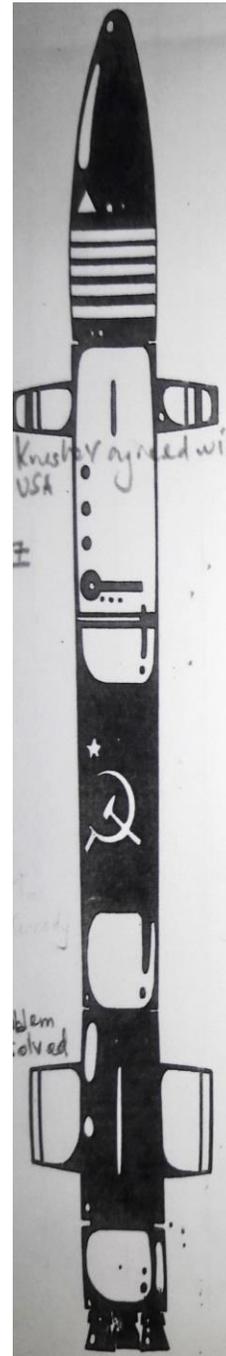
ALIGNED: associated with one of the two power blocs (USSR or the United States).

ÉMIGRÉ: exile from a foreign country.

MILITARY UNITS: patrol boats surface-to-air missiles, MiG-21 fighter planes medium-range missiles and long-range 0020.

CLANDESTINE: hidden.

HOTLINE: a direct and permanently open communication link.



- Kennedy emerged from the crisis with an improved
- For Khrushchev, Cuba was a disaster. Coupled with domestic upheaval, the crisis contributed to this downfall.
- Brinkmanship this tense battle of wits and willpower, was a deadly game to play.
- ← In June 1963, a hotline was established between Moscow and Washington
- ← The dangers of an uncontrolled arms race led to the signing of a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in August 1963 by the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain. These three nations agreed to prohibit all tests of nuclear device in the atmosphere.
- ← Direct action between the United States and USSR should be avoided.
- ← Reckless action threatened world peace. America and Russia had a responsibility towards all people in all nation
- ← Castroism was firmly established in Cuba. The outcome of Cuba's desire for complete independence was to exchange American domination for Russian domination.

Describe events related to the causes of the Cuban Missile crisis.

- **1962**-Soviet weapons and military units began arriving in Cuba
- Revealing of missile site being constructed by U2 surveillance aircraft
- Reports confirmed by the intelligence that vessels carrying more rockets with nuclear warheads were heading for Cuba.

Discuss how the Cuban Missile crisis came close to a world nuclear war.

The most serious crisis of the Cold War began which brought the USSR and the USA to the brink (edge, verge, and threshold) of nuclear war and threatened all humanity.

- The response made by America (Kennedy's decision) was not guaranteed that USSR will do accordingly as they both have nuclear arms.
- The transporting of rockets with nuclear warheads to Cuba would possibly spark off a war if USSR retaliated the naval blockade made by USA. However, USSR made a vital deal with USA and USA gave them an ultimatum for the removing of their weapons. USSR agreed to remove which averted the immediate risk of a nuclear war

Describe how the Cuban Missile crisis was resolved and its effects on international relations

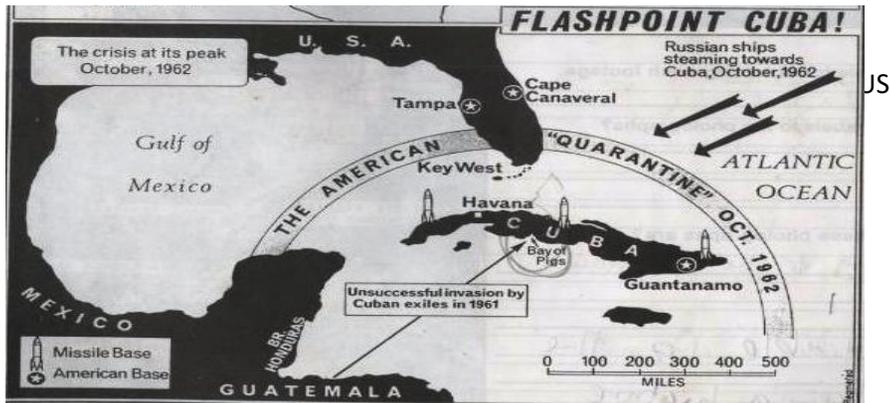
- **America decided to;**

- Strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba. All ships found to contain these will be turned back
- **Oct 24, 1962**- blockade began
- **Oct 26**- Kennedy received a letter from Khrushchev promising him to dismantle Russia's missile bases and return all arsenal to the USSR if America promised to terminate the naval blockade and do not invade Cuba.
- **Oct 28**- Khrushchev agreed to the removing of their offensive weapons from Cuba.

The Cuban missile crisis was over and the immediate risk of nuclear war was averted.

Effects on International relations

- Kennedy emerged from the crisis with an improved reputation but Khrushchev, the crisis contributed to its downfall
- In June 1963, a hotline was established between Moscow and Washington
- The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed to control their arms by Soviet Union, USA and Britain. They agreed to prohibit all tests of nuclear devices in the atmosphere
- Direct action between the US and USSR should be avoided
- Russia and America had a responsibility towards all people in all nations



- c. According to the map, **identify** what did America did in response to what had happened
- a. According to the map, **identify** what was there in Cuba that the US wanted to confront them?
- b. **Describe** why America was concerned with it?

1. **Name** the TWO leaders in the cartoon and their respective countries?
2. **Identify** what crisis was this cartoon refers to?
3. This cartoon suggests that fate of the world was hanging in the balance. **Discuss** how close did the world come to a nuclear war?

CUBA

SENSATIONAL MOVE
BY KENNEDY

BLOCKADE!



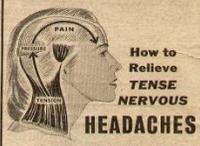
Ultimatum to Khrushchev 'Move those missiles'

Pictured in Washington—Kennedy as he said last night: We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of world-wide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth—but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY last night announced a full-scale blockade of Cuba to stop a build-up of Russian missiles there. He said that Cuba had been turned into an offensive base able to rocket destruction into the heart of America. Early this morning a defence spokesman said the United States is prepared to sink Soviet ships if necessary to prevent offensive weapons from reaching Cuba.

The President's ultimatum to Khrushchev and Russia was given in a radio and TV broadcast to the American people. He said: "Within the next week, unmistakable evidence has emerged that the Soviet Union is now in preparation to the unprovoked attack of Cuba."

Two types
The report of these two types can be seen other than to provide a catalyst for the American people. The President's ultimatum to Khrushchev and Russia was given in a radio and TV broadcast to the American people. He said: "Within the next week, unmistakable evidence has emerged that the Soviet Union is now in preparation to the unprovoked attack of Cuba."



How to Relieve TENSE NERVOUS HEADACHES

ANADIN
Relieves Pain fast
* Releases Pressure
* Eases Tension

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INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA



Identify the domestic challenges confronted by the government of Czechoslovakia (1948-1968) which results in its invasion by the Soviet Union.

- Czech people became restless
- Economic failure
- Trade and industrial production had fallen
- Standard of living had deteriorated

Novotny (leader) was removed from power and Dubcek became secretary of the Czech Communist Party. He announced his reform package 'Socialism with a human face' including;

- freedom of speech
- freedom to travel abroad,
- dissenters were to be released,
- power of the security police was to be curbed
- political differences were to be debated in a New Assembly called the "National front",

- Rigid state control over industry was to be removed and censorship was to be abolished.

The Czech people were full of hope and excitement as they took advantage of this liberalization of thought and expression.

Describe the reaction from Warsaw Pact countries and other Superpowers towards the Soviet Union's action.

(However the ultra conservatives on the Kremlin were not happy with the events in Czechoslovakia) the two leaders met and seemed to be alright but it was the opposite. On August 20, Warsaw pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia.

Reaction from Warsaw Pact countries

- They invaded Czechoslovakia
- Dubcek and his colleagues were arrested and taken to Moscow

Reaction from other Superpowers

- The West was outraged by Soviet action
- Intervention was not a possibility
- The Chinese condemned the Soviet invasion. Their relation had begun to cool

(However, Czechoslovakia was left more isolated)

Explain how the Soviet Union justified its actions with the Brezhnev Doctrine.

- Brezhnev justified the invasion saying that those who are hostile to socialism become not only a problem of the country concerned but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries. They have to intervene in other socialist states to ensure that Soviet domination ran supreme.

Evaluate a given cartoon or text to correctly identify characters and events related to the Cold War crises 1950-1968. (Refers to activities given during class)

Construct a timeline on the major events related to the Cold War crises 1950-1968.

1950- Outbreak of Korean War

1952- Arms race escalates, Eisenhower elected as President of America

1953- Stalin dies. Korean War ends

1954- SEATO formed

1955- Khrushchev emerges undisputed leader of Russia

1956- Process of Destalinization begins; Hungarian uprising

1959- Castro seizes power in Cuba

1960- US increases aid to South Vietnam

- U2 incident

1961- CIA backed down invasion of Cuba; The Berlin Wall is built

1962- Cuban Missile Crisis

1963- Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is signed

1964- Brezhnev replaces disgraced Khrushchev in the Kremlin

1968- Russia invades Czechoslovakia

- Brezhnev Doctrine announced
- Nixon elected as President